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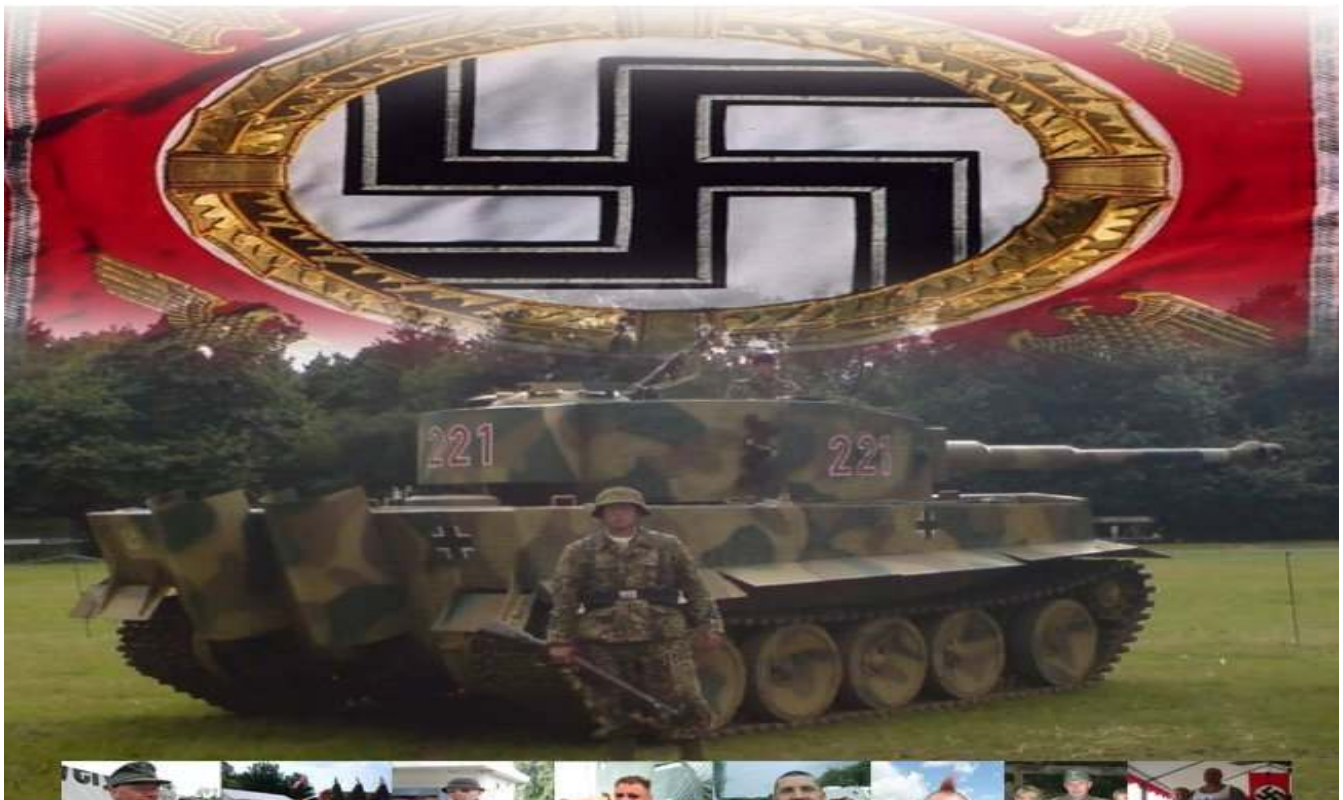
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# HITLER'S Third Reich

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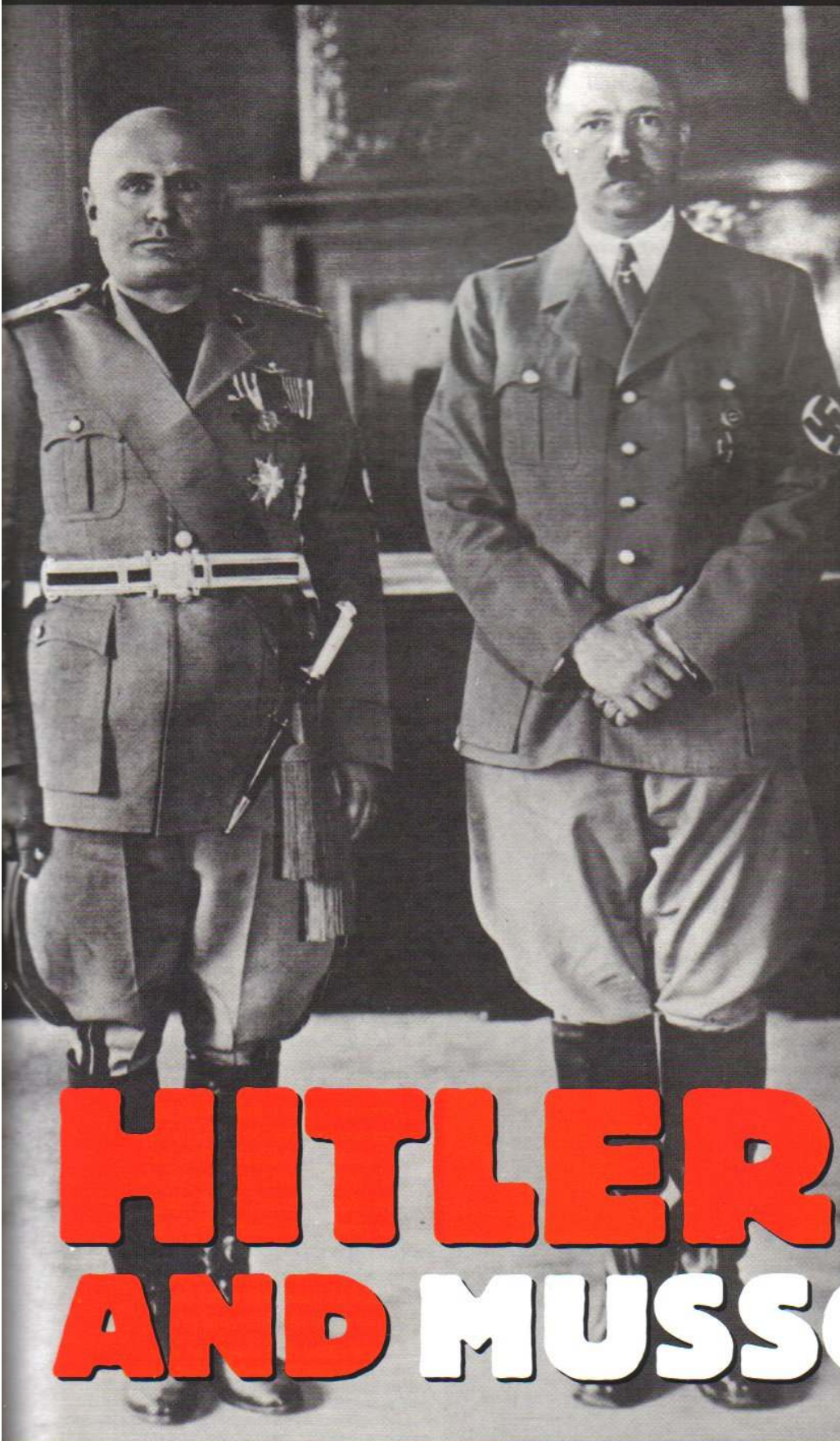
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**Benito Mussolini is remembered today as a vain, boastful jackal. But in the 1920s he was one of the most admired and feared politicians in Europe – and without Mussolini, there might have been no Hitler.**

**H**E IS REMEMBERED as a bombastic, overdressed dictator who rode on Adolf Hitler's coat-tails, a comic opera figure who paid the ultimate price for his ambition. But Mussolini was no joke: he was much more than a self-important clown. The inventor of modern fascism, *Il Duce* was the model on which Hitler based his own rise to power.

Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini, the self-styled modern Caesar, ruled Italy from 1922 until he was deposed in July 1943. His career was contradictory: a left-wing activist in his youth, he became leader of an archetypal right-wing party which set the pattern for 20th century dictatorships. Initially an anti-militarist opposed to Italy's participation in the First World War, he built up the Italian army and Navy in the 1920s and 1930s, launching imperialist military campaigns in the Balkans and in Africa.

He gave the world the concept of Fascism, and for many years was its leading

*Left: Hitler and Mussolini were never truly equals. In the early 1930s the Italian dictator was a politician of worldwide reputation, while the newly elected German Führer was very much his pupil. Within five years, however, Berlin had become the dominant partner in the Axis, and Il Duce had been revealed as a man of straw. Even so, Hitler retained a high regard for his Italian ally to the end of his life.*

# HITLER AND MUSSOLINI





proponent. His example and influence were crucial in the development of right-wing governments elsewhere in Europe – Hitler based many of the institutions of Nazi Germany on the Italian model. But Mussolini's dominance did not last. In 1933 the German Führer cut a very dowdy figure next to the flamboyant Italian leader, and it was only Italian acquiescence which made Hitler's pre-war territorial gains possible. However, by 1939 there was no doubt that

Berlin was very much the senior partner.

Mussolini announced the foundation of the *Fasci di Combattimento* or 'Combat Group' in Milan on 23 March 1919. The name *fasci* was deliberately chosen to bring to mind the bundle of sticks which were the symbol of the magistrates in Ancient Rome.

At much the same time, another discontented war veteran was making his first steps into the political arena. In Munich, Adolf Hitler was taking control of an extreme

right-wing political fringe group known as the National Socialist German Workers Party. Although springing from very different roots, the German and Italian organisations exhibited a number of similarities.

The *Fasci di Combattimento* was primarily a nationalist party, and like Hitler's nascent Nazis it got considerable support from embittered ex-servicemen who felt betrayed by post-war politicians, and who wanted a just reward for the blood they had spilled.

The movement grew far more quickly than Hitler's Nazi Party. Mussolini and 35 other Fascists were elected to Parliament in May 1921. The party gained strength by the activities of fascist *squadre* or squads, small groups set up in provincial capitals to take direct action against socialists and trade unionists. Their activities foreshadowed those of Hitler's stormtroopers: they wrecked and burned out socialist offices and printing presses, and attacked opponents with clubs, knives and guns.

In October 1922 Mussolini's supporters made their famous 'March on Rome.' Thirty thousand armed fascists concentrated at Naples and threatened a popular insurrection aimed at the capital. Mussolini was not with them; he had remained in Milan.

## MUSSOLINI TAKES POWER

It is a myth that the March on Rome lifted Mussolini into power: in fact, a consensus had arisen among right wing politicians, the Vatican, intellectuals, journalists, industrialists and large landholders. They felt that it was time that the government was taken in hand, and that fascism should be given a chance to see what it could do. Most felt that once in power, Mussolini and his blackshirts could be brought to heel, much as the Prussian aristocracy would try to tame Hitler ten years later.

Mussolini acted cautiously at first. His first cabinet was mostly non-fascist, but over the next two years in-fighting among the other political parties allowed *Il Duce* to concentrate power into his own hands. This was not too hard, since he was at one and the same time Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

One person who had watched Mussolini's success with great interest was Adolf Hitler. He believed the fascist myth that the march of the armed Blackshirts had pressured the King into making Mussolini prime minister,

**Left: Adolf Hitler first sought to emulate Mussolini when he modelled his attempt to seize power in 1923 on the Blackshirt 'March on Rome' the year before. When the Munich Putsch failed, he realised that he would have to gain much wider support before taking power.**







and he resolved to use similar tactics in his own grab for power.

On 8 November 1923 Hitler interrupted a patriotic meeting held by senior Bavarian politicians at the Bürgerbräukeller beer hall in Munich. He strode up to the stage, drew a pistol and fired a shot into the ceiling.

## HITLER COPIES MUSSOLINI

"The national revolution has broken out!" he shouted. "The hall is filled with 600 armed men. No one is allowed to leave. The Bavarian government and the government of Berlin are hereby deposed. A new government will be formed at once!"

"The barracks of the *Reichswehr* and the police barracks are occupied. Both have rallied to the swastika! Tomorrow will find a national government in Germany, or it will find us dead!"

The following day more than two thousand men formed up, with Hitler, General Erich Ludendorff, Goering and Julius Streicher at their head. At Feldherrenhalle a line of 100 police blocked the road. Hitler called on the police to surrender. A gun went off and then in a flurry of fire 16 Nazis and three policemen were dead.

Although Hitler escaped, he was later arrested and sentenced to five years in the comfortable fortress prison of Landsberg. In fact, he served barely nine months of his term, but during that time he came to realise that the route to power could only come from the ballot box.

## THE POLITICAL OPTION

Hitler could never have succeeded like Mussolini. In 1923 his Nazi party was too small and too local. It had some influence in Bavaria, but lacked the nationwide organisation of Mussolini's Blackshirts. Above all, the Nazis lacked the broad-based political and financial support which had been enjoyed by *Il Duce*. It took ten years for Hitler to build a party capable of seizing power, which it did in 1933.

The two dictators first met in Venice in 1934. Mussolini was very much the dominant figure, his Italian General's uniform in marked contrast to Hitler's civilian suit and shabby raincoat. *Il Duce* was not wildly impressed by the Führer. During their meeting Hitler talked too much, he told his aides, and instead of discussing the European situation insisted on quoting large tracts of *Mein Kampf*.

Mussolini had shown considerable shrewdness and flexibility in his early days.

As the years passed, however, *Il Duce* became a vain, strutting megalomaniac.

"*Mussolini ha sempre ragione*" – "Mussolini is always right" – was a key slogan of his régime. But in Adolf Hitler the vainglorious Duce more than met his match.

The German Führer had to step carefully at first. The attempted Nazi coup in Austria in 1934 infuriated Mussolini, who regarded

Vienna as within the Italian sphere of influence. Mussolini's reaction to the murder of Chancellor Dollfus was to despatch four divisions to the Brenner Pass and force Hitler to disassociate himself from the Austrian Nazis. German control of Austria would have to wait until 1938.

In the interlude Hitler threw off the shackles imposed at Versailles, re-occupying the Rhineland, re-introducing conscription and unveiling his secretly trained air force.



**Right: It is easy to forget that in his early days Mussolini had been a revolutionary politician of considerable charisma and undoubted skill. An intellectual who spoke fluent French and German, he was considerably more worldly than his German counterpart.**





**Above:** The shabbily-dressed Hitler did not make a great impression on the Italian dictator at their first meeting in Venice in 1934. Hitler was not yet secure in his position, while Mussolini had been absolute ruler of Italy for more than a decade. Even so, Hitler was not overawed by his flamboyant host.

**Below left:** By the time Mussolini celebrated the Führer's birthday in Munich in 1938, everything had changed. It was more than the fact that Hitler could now throw a good ceremony. He was secure in his power, and Germany had overhauled Italy as the most powerful military force on the continent.



Mussolini's attempt to expand his empire by invading Abyssinia (Ethiopia) met with international condemnation led by Britain. The Abyssinian adventure, in which the Italians used aircraft and poison gas, revealed how far short Italy fell from achieving world power status. However it also showed Hitler how easily the western democracies could be manipulated and intimidated.

To counter Soviet aid to the Spanish Republican cause, both Germany and Italy sent military aid to General Francisco Franco and the Nationalists in 1936.

By the time of their next meeting, in Berlin in 1937, the Nazis were determined to impress, and put on a brilliant spectacle. Hitler and Mussolini addressed a mass rally of a quarter of a million people in the Maifeld, which had been built for the 1936 Olympic Games.

Hitler visited Italy again in May 1938, and the Italians did their best to match the Berlin show of the year before. This time, the talks had some substance, but it became clear that Hitler was now the senior partner in the Alliance.

The relationship was strained in March 1938, when Hitler finally marched into Austria. Although Mussolini was outraged by the Nazi takeover, *Il Duce* earned Hitler's undying gratitude by promptly condoning the act.

## THE AXIS

Mussolini was even more valuable to Hitler later in the year. During the Munich crisis, at Hitler's instigation, the Italian dictator set up and conducted the conference between the Axis powers, Britain, and France. The agreement sealed the fate of the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia, which Germany annexed in 1939. *Il Duce* was at the height of his power, playing a leading role on the European political stage. He turned his trip to Munich into another

state visit, and his return home was conducted like a Roman Triumph.

The Pact of Steel, creating the Rome-Berlin Axis, was signed on 22 May 1939. Mussolini did not expect to be ready for world war until 1943, but his negotiators shaped the agreement so it seemed to guarantee Italy safety from German aggression. And he had his own agenda if war should break out. To his intimates he announced plans to annex Malta, Corsica, and Tunis.

## UNTRUSTWORTHY ALLY

The German-Italian alliance was never regarded as an equal partnership in Berlin. Although Mussolini had spoken for years about the virtues and honour of battle, and of Italy's readiness to fight, the German high command judged that the Italians were completely unprepared for a modern war. In any case, Hitler's Generals did not trust their allies.

In fact the Germans never involved Italy in their invasion plans, and Mussolini's last minute declaration of war on France was regarded as the work of a political jackal.

The Italians invaded France with 32 divisions, crossing the frontier along the Riviera coast and in the Alpes Maritimes. It was the first sign that Italian contributions to the war would not be heroic: the invasion force was thrown back by just six French divisions.

It was not an isolated instance of Italian military incompetence. The jackal made the mistake of attacking a second victim on its own. Without informing Germany, Italy invaded Greece. Instead of staging triumphal parades through Athens, the Italian army met fierce resistance and ended the year bogged down in the mountains of Albania with a lengthening casualty list. Only when the predatory Germans descended into the Balkans in April 1941 did the Italian forces advance again.

## DEFEAT IN EGYPT

More disasters came in Egypt, when Marshal Graziani invaded the British protectorate with 125,000 men. A scratch Commonwealth force of 31,000 men under Major-General Richard O'Connor defeated the invaders. In a brilliant campaign the Desert Force threw Graziani's vastly bigger army back 800 kilometres, taking 130,000 prisoners in the process. Only the arrival of General Erwin Rommel and the German Afrika Korps redressed the balance.

Italian humiliation in the Balkans, in North Africa and at sea – where the Royal Navy quickly proved more than a match for the Italian fleet – sealed the Italian reputation as second rate fighting force. It also did nothing for Mussolini's reputation with his own people, and when the Allies invaded Sicily in 1943, *Il Duce* was deposed and imprisoned.





But Adolf Hitler still had a high regard for Mussolini long after it became clear that Italy could offer little to the Axis cause, and ordered his friend's rescue. Otto Skorzeny's dramatic assault on Mussolini's mountain-top prison freed the former Italian dictator, and he was given a fascist puppet state in northern Italy, which would continue to fight alongside the Germans. Hitler installed the 'cardboard Caesar' under heavy SS protection as head of the 'Salo Republic'. Its seat was the village of Gargnano on the western shore of Lake Garda. As an early item of business Mussolini established a tribunal to avenge the coup d'état of 1943. His son-in-law Count Ciano was among those who were sentenced to death on 11 January 1944.

Although a titular head of state, Mussolini was a shadow of his former self, and presented a pathetic figure for the remainder of his life. He continued to inspect military formations, and went about the business of running his Republic with the aid of Marshal Graziani. But he was a broken man.

The health of Il Duce, who once made a great show of his virility, had deteriorated since 1940. In addition to ulcers, he is said to have long suffered from syphilis, which affected his brain, and also from paranoia and claustrophobia.

## FRIEND IN NEED

Even so, he knew who his friends were. When Hitler escaped the 20th of July bomb plot, Mussolini was one of the first to go to the Führer's Prussian headquarters in person, where he was shown how narrowly the Führer had escaped death. It was the last time that the two dictators were to meet.

Mussolini's Salo Republic survived little more than a year. As Allied forces entered the Po Valley in 1945, Mussolini moved his rump government to Milan on 18 April. Forced out after less than a week, he fled northwards in the hope of taking refuge in the Tyrol. Wearing a German greatcoat and helmet he was found hiding in a German army truck at a partisan check point near Lake Como. On 28 April 1945, Il Duce and his mistress of nine years, Clara Petacci, were machine-gunned to death.

The next morning, their bodies and those of four others were hung by their feet at a gas station in Milan's Piazzale Loreto, where 15 Italian hostages had been killed some eight months earlier. That evening the cadavers were taken down on orders of Allied authorities, who had Mussolini buried secretly in a Milan cemetery.

Adolf Hitler survived his fellow dictator by only two days, committing suicide in a Berlin bunker on 30 April.



*Above: Hitler and Mussolini watch a display by the Italian fleet just before the outbreak of war. The alliance between the two countries did little to help Germany militarily, but as a political and diplomatic tool it was of inestimable value to the Nazis.*

*Right: A shaken Hitler greets Mussolini soon after surviving the 20 July 1944 bomb attack. By this time Mussolini had been deposed, imprisoned, released by German commandos and set up by the Führer in his own north Italian puppet state.*



*Below: Hitler and Mussolini died violently within days of each other. The Italian dictator and his mistress were gunned down on 28 April by Communist partisans and their bodies put on public display in a Milan piazza. If news of his fate reached Hitler, it might have persuaded the Führer to commit suicide rather than face the same end.*





# THE RAPE OF POLAND

**Poland was the first country to be invaded by the Germans. As a result, it was the first to experience the horrors of Nazi occupation – a fate it was to suffer longer than any other state.**

*It is 1 September 1939, and German soldiers gleefully smash a border crossing into Poland. Within weeks the Polish army will suffer catastrophic defeat – and the Polish people will begin to suffer five years of oppression, pillage and mass murder.*





**S**IX MILLION Poles died during Hitler's War, proportionally more than any other country. Three quarters of a million fell in battle: the other 5.3 million were murdered. Poland's pre-war Jewish population of close to 3 million was the second highest in Europe. By 1945 it had been reduced to some 150,000 souls.

From 1795 until the end of the First World War Poland had been divided between the three empires that so often fought over her territory – Germany, Russia and Austria. Independence in 1919 brought new problems.

The legacy of such prolonged subjugation could not be overcome in two decades, and the Poles themselves were not above a bit of oppression. Indeed, between the wars the Polish government treated Belorussian, Ukrainian and Jewish minorities with a brutal contempt. Its chauvinistic

nationalism inspired strange scenes when the Red Army occupied eastern Poland in 1939. In many areas, where anti-Polish feelings ran high, the Soviets were welcomed as liberators.

Defeat in the opening months of World War II saw Poland suffering a familiar fate, her land divided between two superior powers – in this case Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

## SPOILS OF WAR

Within weeks of the German conquest, the coal-rich western provinces of Silesia, Pomorze and Poznan had been incorporated into the German Reich, along with most of Lodz and parts of Warsaw, Krakow and Kielce provinces. The area included those parts of Germany ceded to Poland in 1919, and was known as the *Warthegau*.

The rest of German-occupied Poland became known as the 'General Government' and was ruled by Nazi lawyer Hans Frank.

After the invasion of Russia brought the remainder of pre-war Poland under Nazi control, the south-east was added to Frank's fiefdom. The eastern provinces were divided between the *Reichkommissariats* of the Ukraine and Ostland which ruled in the occupied territories (the latter including the Baltic States).

The Polish government fled to France where a government-in-exile was established in Paris, withdrawing to London in 1940. Most political and religious leaders escaped too, including the Catholic Primate of All Poland. The Germans made a half-hearted attempt to create a puppet government, approaching the leader of the peasant movement, Wincenty Witos, who refused. Boleslaw Piasecki, head of the Polish Fascist party, was eager to be the Polish Quisling, but Hitler lost interest. Determined on his invasion of Russia, Hitler wanted Poland under direct German



*Above: Polish women comfort the victim of a humiliating attack by the occupying forces. The German army treated the Poles badly, but the civil administration which followed was even worse.*

*Top: Children watch anxiously as German bombers fly over the city of Warsaw. Those that survived the ferocious bombing risked being kidnapped by the Nazis for childless families back in Germany – but only if they looked Aryan enough.*





**Above:** Poland was ruthlessly divided between Germany and the USSR. Here, diplomats from the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw talk to German soldiers on the demarcation line.

**Below:** Polish troops are loaded onto Wehrmacht lorries as they are taken into captivity. Many of the officers were murdered: the best that ordinary troops could expect was to be used as slaves.



control and had no need to bother with a political fig-leaf.

At first, the country was administered by the German army, before Frank took charge. In that time more than 16,000 Poles were executed and 531 villages burned in acts of officially-sanctioned 'reprisal.' These were out of all proportion to the degree of resistance encountered, and were designed to terrorise the population into abandoning all thoughts of partisan activity.

In other cases the killings were carried out as part of a systematic

extermination of Polish nationalists. In areas where there was a minority German population, Poles associated with nationalist politics 'disappeared.' In Silesia, Poles who had agitated for the province's incorporation into Poland in 1919 were shot.

Hans Frank ruled the General Government from a palace outside Warsaw. He filled it with looted antiques, old masters and a succession of young Polish mistresses. State enterprises were seized and dished out to German managers on the basis of Nazi

patronage. The country was there to be exploited, its population regarded as no more than a labour pool. Except for some of the children. About 40,000 Polish children were identified as 'Aryan' by committees of cranks and pseudo-scientists. Stolen from their parents, they were taken to Germany and adopted. Records of their previous lives were erased and few saw their real families again.

## RELUCTANT COLONISTS

In those areas transferred to the Reich, many Polish families were expelled and replaced by ethnic Germans from communities throughout eastern Europe. Following a deal with Stalin early in 1940, 128,000 ethnic Germans from the Baltic States and Russia were uprooted and transported to Germany; many were re-settled in Poland.

However, Hitler's dream of a German empire in the east was not shared by his people. There was no tide of German farmer/settlers to occupy the vacant lands, just a predictable wave of black marketeers, corrupt businessmen and Party hacks. Even with all the coercion that the Third Reich could muster, it failed to fill the void: the fact was that Germany did not need the 'living space' that had so obsessed Hitler.

Estimates of the number of Poles used as slave labourers in Germany rise as high as three million. Poles were eligible to be selected from the age of 14. Their treatment was extremely harsh – which was counter-productive because the poor food and conditions did nothing for their efficiency as workers.

German control of the countryside was equally heavy-handed. Food delivery quotas were set high and then raised. Little remained for the Poles themselves. The daily calorific value of the rations issued in Warsaw during 1941 worked out as 2,613 for German workers, 669 for Poles and 184 for Jews.

## ERADICATE POLAND

The Nazis planned to eradicate Polish culture. All Polish institutions of higher education were closed. Educated Poles were arrested, and a disproportionately high proportion of teachers, doctors, priests and university lecturers found themselves in concentration camps, where their prospects of survival were grim.

Germany's treatment of Poland stimulated one of the most powerful resistance movements in occupied Europe. Although most of the high command had fled the country, there were enough officers remaining to form the AK (Home Army). The government-in-exile sank its differences with all pre-war political parties except the Communists. The result was one broad-based resistance organisation, ready for the day when liberation dawned, and another smaller group looking to Moscow for leadership.

The AK's main mission was to re-establish the authority of the government-in-exile during the transition between German and Russian occupation. Acts of resistance triggered savage retribution from the Germans, so they tended to be very selective.

It had become obvious by that summer that the Red Army would eventually drive the Germans out, but the government-in-exile feared a Communist-inspired 'revolution' would be staged, with the small





## THE FIRST EINSATZGRUPPEN

Their full name was *Einsatzgruppen des Sicherheitsdienstes und Sicherheitspolizei*, or 'Special action groups of the Security Service and Security Police.' The *Einsatzgruppen* became infamous in Russia in 1941, where the 'special actions' their title referred to were the mass murders of up to a million Jews and Communist Party officials. The *Einsatzgruppen* carried out the first stages of the Holocaust – the deliberate and planned extermination of Europe's Jews. But that had not been their original task.

The first *Einsatzgruppen* were formed by Himmler and Heydrich in 1938 to accompany the German Army as it marched into Austria. They were primarily mobile intelligence units of the SD, tasked with identifying and arresting 'Marxists' and other potential opponents of the Nazi regime. They operated until the SD could set up permanent offices in the occupied territory. Similar squads were used during the annexation of Czechoslovakia.

Heydrich organized six *Einsatzgruppen* for the invasion of Poland in September 1939. Each group was divided into two or three *Einsatzkommandos*; the 15 *Kommandos* each had a strength of between 120 and 150 men. The members of the *Einsatzgruppen* were drawn primarily from the SD, the Security Police and the SS.

Their stated task was to follow German troops into Poland. According to a Wehrmacht order of the day, their main areas of responsibility were "combatting hostile elements, conducting counter-espionage, identifying and imprisoning suspected political opponents, confiscating arms and collecting intelligence."

'Combatting hostile elements' covered a multitude of sins, and the *Einsatzkommandos* interpreted the concept fairly broadly. In practice, enemies were whoever the SD said they were – which meant that they included Poland's three million Jews. An important task for the *Einsatzgruppen* was beginning the process of rounding them up and resettling them in ghettos. Plans to eliminate Poland's Jews were very much a long-term goal however. In a 21 September briefing by Heydrich to the Army High Command, the head of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* made it clear that this was only a temporary measure, pending the 'final solution' to the Jewish problem.

The immediate task was to wipe Poland from the map. Large areas were to be annexed to Germany, the population enslaved and their property and lands given to *volksdeutsch* settlers. Even though these units did not have mass murder as a primary mission, they were responsible for a number of atrocities. To minimise the task of rebellion, the SS was assigned to eliminate Poland's higher echelons including the intelligentsia, clerics, military officers and landowners. Between ten and fifteen thousand were murdered before the *Einsatzgruppen* were deactivated on 20 November 1939.



Above: Many among the *Einsatzgruppen* remained in Poland, forming the staffs of the permanent SD posts in the country. They continued with their task of weeding out potential opposition to the Nazis: here a group of SS men are about to execute blindfolded captives near Palmiry.



Above: A rare photo of an *Einsatzkommando* in action at Piasnica in 1939. Here the SS men are executing a number of men classed as potential leaders of Polish opposition – teachers, writers, doctors and priests. The man about to die is Father Piotr Sosnowski.



Left: Special detachments of the SD were set up as required to operate all over occupied Europe. Here, a group of Czech citizens are being executed in the massive crackdown which followed the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich.





**Above:** For the Jewish population of Poland confinement to the ghetto meant permanent separation from the rest of the country. This is one of three bridges connecting two parts of the Ghetto at Lodz, made necessary because it had been impossible for the Germans to re-route the city's trams around the ghetto.

**Below:** Most of Poland's Jews were to die in the Holocaust. At first, the Germans used mass graves to dispose of the bodies of the victims, but as the final solution got into its full stride the bodies were burned.

**Below:** German rule in Poland was vicious. Any Pole suspected of being members of the resistance or caught harbouring Jews risked summary execution. These were carried out in public as an object lesson to the population.



Communist resistance movement being catapulted into power by Stalin's T-34s.

In fact, the Comintern starved the Communist partisan movement of resources. Its personnel were swept into the Polish divisions of the Soviet army in 1944. Stalin's 'Lublin government' was never allowed a



military force independent of the Red Army.

The revelation in April 1943 that the bodies of 15,000 Polish officers captured by the Russians in 1939 had been found in mass graves in Katyn Forest outside Smolensk confirmed the Poles' worst suspicions of the Soviet Union. The stage was set for the

tragedy of the Warsaw Uprising.

Anti-Semitism had been stoked in Poland before the war by Catholic fundamentalists and the triumphant nationalism of Pilsudski's successors. This mind set was exploited by the Germans. They had discovered that even some of the Polish resistance agreed with Hitler's genocidal policy.

## INTO THE GHETTO

Poland's Jewish population was herded into ghettos. Sheltering Jews outside the ghetto was punishable by death; cash rewards awaited the betrayer of Jews and anyone sheltering them. It was a blackmailer's paradise.

Collective responsibility ruled in the ghetto: acts of resistance resulted in all being punished. Community leaders were placed in a hideous dilemma, restraining would-be resistance fighters so that the rest might survive a little longer. Escape was discouraged. The *Judenrat* leaders calculated logically but wrongly that if they made their ghettos indispensable to the German war economy, Nazi self-interest would outweigh race hatred.

There were about 400 ghettos, mostly very small, but those in Warsaw and Lodz were cities within cities. From March 1942

the smaller ghettos were closed, their inhabitants concentrated or dispatched direct to the death camps. In May, the Krakow ghetto was closed, its people being sent to Majdenek where they were killed in the gas chambers. Between June and September 1942 some 250,000 Jews were taken from the Warsaw ghetto and gassed at Treblinka.

## RESISTANCE

The Warsaw ghetto remained in postal and telephone contact with the rest of the city. Its few remaining inhabitants learned of the impending destruction of the ghetto and, their resistance leadership no longer fettered by the *Judenrat*, an uprising was planned. On 19 April 1943 the Jews fought back and held out until 16 May despite their pitifully inadequate weaponry. There were other risings at Bedzin and Bialystok. They could be no more than token efforts, but the symbolism was important. At least they had died fighting back.

The Commander of the Jewish Fighters' Organisation in Bialystok was Mordechai Tennenbaum Tamaroff. Before he was killed, he issued the following proclamation: "We conjure you: In the name of the shed blood of our children – take vengeance! Avenge our tortured mothers, avenge our profaned martyrs – take vengeance for us!"

As numerous kidnappings and assassinations in Germany and South America after the war were to prove, the handful of survivors from the Polish ghettos would return to haunt some of their persecutors.

## POST-WAR

Poland's borders were redrawn at the end of the war. The country gained German territory including much of East Prussia, while losing eastern provinces to the USSR. The population fell from a pre-war total of 35 million to 24 million. The long period of Soviet occupation that followed, punctuated by revolts and military coups set the seal on a horrific period in Polish history.



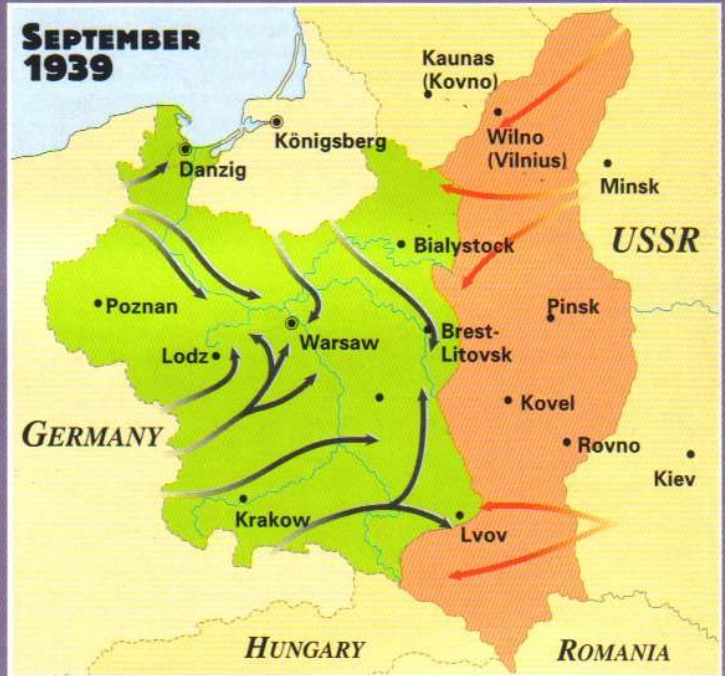


# POLAND'S CHANGING BORDERS



Above: Poland disappeared between 1795 and 1919. It re-emerged as an independent state after World War I, dividing East Prussia from Germany and gaining Russian territory after a war in 1920.

Below: By the time of the German invasion of Russia in 1941, the Bialystock district, the Warthegau and Lower Silesia had been annexed into the Reich. What remained was known as the General Government.



Above: The German attack in September 1939 used German demands for free access to the 'Polish corridor' and Danzig as a pretext for invasion. The Soviet invasion which followed split the country in two.

Below: After the war, the Allies approved of new frontiers for Poland. The Soviets retained much of what they had seized in 1939, while the Poles gained East Prussia and former German territory up to the Oder.







# Massacre at Katyn

On 13 April 1943, the German authorities declared that the Wehrmacht had discovered a mass grave in Katyn Forest, near Smolensk. It contained the bodies of thousands of Polish officers, missing since 1940 and thought to have been held by the Soviets. The Nazi propaganda machine made a meal of the discovery – ignoring the fact that the SD's *Einsatzgruppen* had perpetrated equally horrible crimes, and even worse was occurring in the death camps.

The Germans set up an independent investigation, which included a Swiss pathologist and Allied prisoners of war. They determined that there were 4,143 bodies in the mass grave, all wearing Polish army uniforms and none carrying documents dated later than 6 May 1940. Witnesses testified that they had seen many Soviet trucks carrying Polish prisoners towards the forest at about that time. The conclusion was obvious: the Russians had murdered the cream of Poland's army.

The Soviets conducted their own investigation after retaking Smolensk later that year. They blamed the Germans for the massacre, and the British and the Americans chose not to question their findings. They even refused a request by the Polish Government-in-exile for a Red Cross investigation.

## THE TRUTH, HALF A CENTURY LATE

In the event, it was not until 1990 that Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev admitted that the massacre had been perpetrated by Stalin's secret police, the NKVD. About 15,000 officers were captured by the Soviets in 1939. In March 1940 the NKVD reported that 14,700 Polish officers were being held, together with another 11,000 "spies, saboteurs, land owners, factory owners, and government officials".

To contain any possible 'counter-revolutionary activities', Stalin ordered that the captives be tried and shot. In addition to the 4,200 killed at Katyn, a further 10,200 were shot at Kharkov and Kalinin, with another 7,300 killed in other camps and prisons.

*Right and below: Most of the victims at Katyn were Reserve officers, called up at the outbreak of war. Included in their number were doctors, lawyers, teachers and businessmen – the kind of people who would have been natural leaders of resistance to Soviet rule.*







Above: The German investigation of the massacre was conducted with full publicity, and the team included neutrals, priests and allied prisoners of war. Their conclusions were broadcast by Radio Berlin, eager to blame an atrocity on somebody else for a change.

Below: The NKVD had simply shot the victims and shoved them in the mass graves: the German investigators found uniforms, identity papers, letters, family photographs and many other items which fixed the date of the massacre as being some time in May of 1940.

Right: According to the Swiss pathologist on the investigation team, the condition of the remains was consistent with the bodies having been in the ground for three years. All of the victims had been gagged, bound and dispatched NKVD-style with a single shot in the head.





On 1 August 1936, Hitler opened the Xlth Olympiad. Musical fanfares directed by the famous composer Richard Strauss announced the dictator's arrival to the largely German crowd.

# BERLIN OLYMPICS

**The Berlin Olympics of 1936 politicised sport for the first time. Going ahead against a background of protest over Hitler's treatment of Germany's Jews, the games were a huge propaganda coup for the new Nazi regime.**

**O**N 13 MAY 1931, the International Olympic Committee, headed by Count Henri Baillet-Latour of Belgium, awarded the 1936 Summer Olympics to Berlin. The choice signaled Germany's return to the world community after defeat in World War I.

Two years later, Europe was presented with a far more self-confident government than the

sick republic of Weimar, Adolf Hitler was now chancellor of Germany and quickly turned the nation's fragile democracy into a one-party dictatorship. Police rounded up thousands of political opponents, detaining them without trial in concentration camps. The Nazi regime also put into practice racial policies that aimed to 'purify' and strengthen the Germanic 'Aryan' population. A relentless campaign began to

exclude Germany's small Jewish community from all aspects of German life.

Hitler in fact initially held the Olympics in low regard. The internationalism of the games he held suspect, competition with former enemy powers he termed "odious," and the participation of Jews and negroes was undesirable. But he became an avid supporter after Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, convinced him of their propaganda value. The regime eventually fully supported the event providing financial support to the tune of 20,000,000 Reichmarks.

## ARYAN SUPERMEN

The progressive Nazification of German life extended even to sport. A staunch ally of Hitler, Hans von Tschammer und Osten, headed the Reich Sports Office, which oversaw all sports bodies

and clubs, including the German Olympic Committee planning the 1936 Games.

The government harnessed sport as part of its drive to strengthen the 'Aryan race,' to exercise political control over its citizens, and to prepare German youth for war. In April 1933 the Reich Sports Director announced that "Every German athlete should voluntarily participate in strengthening the military might of the German people."

But 'non-Aryans' – Jewish or part-Jewish and Gypsy athletes – were systematically excluded from German sports facilities and associations. The German Boxing Association expelled amateur champion Eric Seelig in April 1933 because he was Jewish. Seelig later resumed his boxing career in the United States. Another Jew, Daniel Prenn, Germany's top-ranked tennis player, was removed from





Germany's Davis Cup Team. Gypsies, including the boxer Johann 'Rukelie' Trollmann, were also purged from German sports. Trollman, the German middleweight boxing champion, had been banned from competition in June 1933 for "racial reasons."

In the face of such persecution Jewish athletes, barred from German sports clubs, flocked to separate Jewish associations, but Jewish sports facilities were no match for those of the well-funded German groups. Even these marginal training facilities, were later to be suppressed.

## JEWISH PERSECUTION

The world became used in the latter half of the twentieth century to political controversy surrounding the Olympics, but in the early 1930s the notion of boycotting the games was a novel concept. However, soon after Hitler took power in 1933, the western democracies began to question the morality of supporting Olympic Games hosted by the Nazi regime.

Responding to reports of the persecution of Jewish athletes in 1933, Avery Brundage, president of the American Olympic Committee, stated: "The very foundation of the modern Olympic revival will be undermined if individual countries are allowed to restrict participation by reason of class, creed, or race."

Brundage, like many others in the Olympics movement, initially considered moving the Games from Germany. However, after a brief and tightly managed inspection of German sports facilities in 1934, Brundage stated publicly that Jewish athletes were being treated fairly and that the Games should go on, as planned. Brundage even went so far as to allege the existence of a "Jewish-Communist conspiracy" to keep the United States out of the Games.

Many American newspaper editors and anti-Nazi groups, led by Jeremiah Mahoney, president of the Amateur Athletic Union,



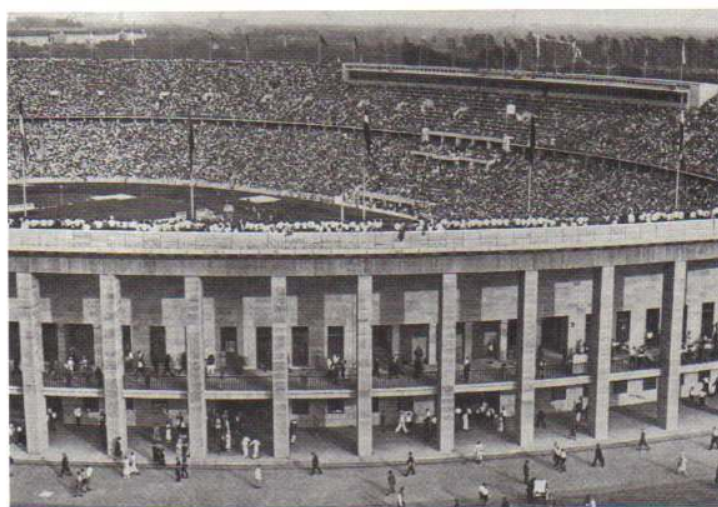
were unwilling to be similarly duped by Nazi Germany's hollow pledges and lies regarding German Jewish athletes. But a determined Avery Brundage maneuvered the Amateur Athletic Union to a close vote in favor of sending an American team to Berlin, and, in the end, Mahoney's boycott effort failed.

## BOYCOTT FOUNDERS

Short-lived boycott efforts also surfaced in Great Britain, France, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and the Netherlands. German Socialists and Communists in exile voiced their opposition to the Games through publications such as *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (The Worker Illustrated Newspaper). Some boycott proponents supported counter-Olympics. One of the largest was the

*Above: Forty-nine athletic teams from around the world competed in the Berlin Olympics. Germany had the largest team at the Berlin Games with 348 athletes. The Soviet Union did not participate in the Games or any Olympiad until the 1952 Helsinki Games.*

*Below: The magnificent Olympic Stadium was not the only Nazi building project at the time. During the festivities a major concentration camp was under construction at Sachsenhausen, 18 miles north of Berlin.*







## JEWS OUSTED



*Above: As a token gesture to mollify the West, German authorities allowed the half-Jewish fencer Helene Mayer to represent Germany in Berlin. No other Jewish athlete competed for Germany. Helene Mayer claimed a silver medal in women's individual foil and, like all other German medallists, gave the Nazi salute on the podium. Returning to Germany after the war she died in 1952.*

**T**HE NAZIS deliberately excluded Jews from amateur and professional competition. There was no place in Nazi ideology for a Jew demonstrating sporting excellence. Successful Jewish athletes were dismissed as aberrations or freaks of nature.

**March 1933** The city of Cologne prohibits Jews from using city playgrounds and sports facilities.

**4 April 1933** The German Boxing Federation excludes Jewish boxers from participating in competitive bouts and orders the cancellation of all contracts involving Jewish promoters.

**25 April 1933** The Reich Sports Office directs implementation of an "Aryans only" policy in all German sports and gymnastic organizations. The order does not apply to Jewish war veterans or their descendants.

**24 May 1933** The German Gymnastic Society decrees that 'Aryan' ancestry is mandatory for membership in their organization.

**2 June 1933** The Prussian Ministry of Science orders all Jewish youth expelled from village, city, county, and district groups of physical education associations and organisations, and their privileges rescinded.

**9 July 1933** The All-German Chess Convention excludes all Jews from its membership.

**22 August 1933** Jews are excluded from public swimming pools in Wannsee (Berlin), Fulda, Beuthen, Speyer, and elsewhere.

**Sep/Oct 1933** "Non-Aryans" are prohibited from being professional or amateur jockeys.

**7 March 1934** The Reich Youth Leadership prohibits German Jewish youth groups from

wearing uniforms.

**19 June 1935** The Baden Minister of Interior prohibits group hikes and similar activities for all non-National Socialist youth groups.

*Below: Two days after the Olympics, Captain Wolfgang Fürstner (centre with cap), head of the Olympic village, killed himself after he was dismissed from active military service because of his Jewish ancestry.*



*Below: Goebbels won over an initially reluctant Hitler to the idea of staging the Olympics in Berlin in 1936. Germany was still the pariah of Europe, and Goebbels knew that Germany could ill-afford to overlook the propaganda possibilities offered by the Games.*



'People's Olympiad' planned for summer 1936 in Barcelona, Spain; it was cancelled following the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, just as thousands of athletes had begun to arrive. Individual Jewish athletes from a number of European countries also chose to boycott the Berlin Olympics.

Once the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States voted for participation in December 1935, however, the other countries fell in line. Forty-nine teams from around the world competed in the Berlin Games, more than in any previous Olympics.

The Olympics were a perfect arena for the Nazi propaganda machine, which was unsurpassed at staging elaborate public spectacles and rallies. Choreographed pageantry, record-breaking athletic feats,

and warm German hospitality made the 1936 Olympic Games memorable for athletes and spectators.

### PROPAGANDA COUP

Germany skillfully promoted the Olympics with colorful posters and magazine spreads. Athletic imagery drew a link between Nazi Germany and ancient Greece. These portrayals symbolised the Nazi racial myth that superior German civilization was the rightful heir of an 'Aryan' culture of classical antiquity. The Nazis reduced their vision of classical antiquity to ideal 'Aryan' racial types: heroic, blue-eyed blonds with finely-chiseled features.

Concerted propaganda efforts continued well after the Olympics with the international release in 1938 of *Olympia*, Leni Riefenstahl's controversial film





documentary of the Games.

During the run-up to the Games and throughout the competition, the Reich Press Chamber under Joseph Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda exerted strict censorship over the German press, radio, film, and publishing. The Chamber issued numerous directives regarding coverage of the Olympic Games, limiting the scope and content of reporting by German journalists.

## PRESS CONTROLS

"German papers printing reports prior to the release of official press report do so at their own risk." (22 July 1936.)

"Press coverage should not mention that there are two non-Aryans among the German women: Helene Mayer (fencing) and Gretel Bergmann (high jump and all-around track and field competition)." (16 July 1936.)

"The racial point of view should not be used in any way in reporting sports results; above all Negroes should not be insensitively reported... Negroes are American citizens and must be treated with respect as Americans." (3 August 1936.)

"No comments should be made regarding Helene Mayer's non-Aryan ancestry or her expectations for a gold medal at the Olympics." (19 February 1936.)

"The northern section of the Olympic village, originally utilized by the Wehrmacht, should not be referred to as *Kasernel* (the barracks), but will hereafter be called 'North Section Olympic Village.'" (27 July 1936.)

## HIDDEN ANTISEMITISM

In anticipation of both the Winter Olympics and the Summer Games, the Führer directed that signs stating "Jews not wanted" and similar slogans should be removed from primary traffic arteries. In some places, however, anti-Jewish signs remained visible.

*Der Stürmer*, Julius Streicher's rabidly anti-Jewish newspaper, was removed from news kiosks

during the Games as a concession to the International Olympic Committee. But the paper was still published, using racist slurs and caricatures to malign Jews in its special Olympics issue of July 1936.

In a move to 'clean up' Berlin before the Olympics, the German Ministry of Interior authorised the chief of the Berlin Police to arrest all Gypsies prior to the Games. On 16 July 1936, some 800 Gypsies were arrested and interned under police guard in a special Gypsy camp in the Berlin suburb of Marzahn. Also in preparation for the arrival of Olympic spectators, Nazi officials ordered that foreign visitors should not be subjected to the criminal strictures of the Nazi anti-homosexual laws.

Sanitary conditions were totally inadequate in the Marzahn camp where arrested gypsies were interned under a police guard prior to the opening of the Olympics. Marzahn was situated near a sewage dump and cemetery, and contagious diseases flourished.

## WINTER GAMES

From 6 to 16 February 1936, Germany hosted the Winter Olympics at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in the Bavarian Alps. Seven hundred and fifty six athletes from 28 countries participated. Yielding to international Olympic leaders' insistence on 'fair play,' Hitler allowed Rudi Ball, who was half-Jewish, to compete on the nation's ice hockey team.

Off the piste however, Western journalists observed and reported on troop maneuvers at Garmisch. As a result of the press coverage, the Nazi regime would minimize the military's presence at the Summer Olympics.

A central aim of Hitler's Third Reich was territorial expansion through military conquest. To prepare for war, the regime reintroduced compulsory military service in 1935. On 7 March 1936 – twelve days after the Winter Olympics and five months before the Summer



# AMUSED

**E**IGHTEEN BLACK ATHLETES represented the United States in the 1936 Olympics. African Americans dominated the popular track and field events. Many American journalists hailed the victories of Jesse Owens and other blacks as a blow to the Nazi myth of Aryan supremacy. Goebbels's press censorship prevented German reporters from expressing their prejudices freely, but one leading Nazi newspaper demeaned the black athletes by referring to them as 'auxiliaries'. The continuing social and economic discrimination the black medallists faced upon returning home underscored the irony of their victories in racist Germany.

Owens was besieged by autograph seekers throughout his stay in Germany and was cheered loudly every time he entered the stadium by the mostly German audience. Jesse Owens, "the fastest human being," captured four gold medals and became the hero of the Olympics. Immediately after the Games, Owens hoped to capitalise on his fame and quit the AAU's European tour of post-Olympic meets; for this action, the AAU suspended him from amateur competition.

*Top: The foreign press spread a story that Hitler refused to shake Jesse Owens's hand or congratulate other black medalists. In fact, during the very first day of Olympic competition, Olympic protocol officers implored Hitler to receive either all the medal winners or none. The Führer chose the latter.*

*Below: Joseph Goebbels' radical Nazi newspaper Der Angriff (The Attack) commented that: "If the American team had not brought along black auxiliaries, one would have regarded the Yankees as the biggest disappointment of the Games."*







*Above: From 6 February to 16 February 1936, Germany hosted the Winter Olympics at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in the Bavarian Alps. The presence of the German military at the Winter Games cast a pall over the entire festival.*

*Below: Mr and Mrs Hermann Goering observe the competition at Garmisch. In 1936 Goering was at the height of his powers. Unlike Hitler he often chose to appear in public in civilian garb, though this was often nearly as flamboyant as his comic opera military uniforms.*



Games – German troops crossed the Rhine River and entered the demilitarized zone between France and Germany. The reoccupation of the Rhineland was a serious international provocation that violated the treaties of Versailles and Locarno.

Hitler later reportedly admitted: “If the French had marched into the Rhineland, we would have had to withdraw with our tails between our legs, for the military resources at our disposal would have been wholly inadequate for even a moderate resistance.”

International opinion was still indulgent towards the militaristic new German regime however, and the games went ahead, in spite of Hitler.

In August 1936 Olympic flags and swastikas bedecked the monuments and houses of a festive, crowded Berlin. Tourists thronged to the events and enjoyed themselves beneath the Berlin sun. They were enjoying what Germans had already learnt to call “Führer weather.”

Not all were duped by the show. US correspondent William Shirer wrote in his diary on 16 August 1936: “I’m afraid the Nazis have succeeded with their propaganda. First, the Nazis have run the Games on a lavish scale never before experienced, and this has appealed to the athletes. Second, the Nazis have put up a very good front for the general visitors, especially the big businessmen.”

## DEUTSCHLAND UBER ALLES

Germany emerged victorious from the XIth Olympiad. Its athletes captured the most medals overall, with 33 gold, 36 silver and 30 bronze medals and German hospitality and organisation won the praises of visitors. Most newspaper accounts echoed Frederick Birchall’s report in *The New York Times* that the Games put Germany “back in the fold of nations,” and even made them “more human again.” Some even

found reason to hope that this peaceable interlude would endure. Only a few reporters regarded the Berlin glitter as merely hiding a racist, militaristic regime. As the post-Games reports were filed, Hitler pressed on with grandiose plans for German expansion. These included taking over the Olympics forever.

In 1937, Hitler inspected Reich architect Albert Speer’s design for a future Olympic stadium at Nuremberg. Speer’s model for a colossal, 400,000-seat stadium satisfied the Führer’s infatuation with monumental forms as a means of projecting German supremacy. Hitler’s imagination was obviously fired by the model, and Speer later related how the Führer had exclaimed: “In 1940 the Olympic Games will take place in Tokyo. But thereafter they will take place in Germany for all time to come, in this stadium.”

## TRUCE ENDS

The pause in Germany’s anti-Jewish campaign was brief. William E. Dodd, the U.S. ambassador to Germany, reported that Jews awaited “with fear and trembling” the end of the Olympic truce.

In 1937 German Jewish track star Gretel Bergmann, among others, emigrated to the United States to escape persecution.

After plans collapsed to hold the 1940 Winter Games at St. Moritz, Switzerland, Hitler gained an unexpected opportunity to return the Olympics to Germany. In June 1939, Garmisch-Partenkirchen was again named to host the 1940 Winter Olympics. Claiming to have made the decision “regardless of political considerations,” the International Olympic Committee voted unanimously to return to Germany “in the interests of sport and the Olympic movement.” Germany withdrew their invitation for the Games in November 1939, two months after it invaded Poland.





# THE NEW OLYMPIANS



**Above:** As Director of the Reich Sports Office, Hans von Tschammer und Osten controlled the German Olympic Committee. In April 1933 he implemented an "Aryans only" policy in all German athletic organisations.

**Right:** German propaganda drew a link between Nazi Germany and ancient Greece, so engendering the spurious Nazi racial myth that German civilisation was the rightful heir of an 'Aryan' culture of classical antiquity.

**I**N THE 1930s HITLER made it a priority to promote amongst German youth the myth of Aryan racial superiority and physical power. Imagery of the period idealised athletes' well-developed muscle tone and heroic strength and accentuated so-called Aryan facial features – blue eyes and blond hair. Hitler's children were to be the new Olympians, with bodies and minds bent according to his will. Total emphasis was placed on victory. To win was everything and the fashionably English doctrine of fairplay was derided as a philosophy for losers.

**Below:** Members of the Hitler Youth participate in a boxing match. The ideals of physical fitness and combat were instilled into young German minds as early as possible.



**Below:** A combined physical fitness demonstration by members of the BDM and HJ in the Marienplatz in Munich. German youth benefitted from a good diet of healthy food and exercise. They were going to need every physical resource in the coming war.



**Above:** Inaugurating a new Olympic ritual, a lone runner opened the games by lighting a flame with a torch carried by relay from the site of the ancient Games in Olympia, Greece.

**Below:** The Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM) – Nazi League of German Girls, a branch of the Hitler Youth – trained girls as physically fit future mothers and homemakers.







**Arthur**

# Seyss-Inquart

## TROJAN HORSE

On 19 May 1940, Hitler appointed Arthur Seyss-Inquart to be Reich Commissioner of the Occupied Netherlands, with instructions to create friendship between the Dutch and the Germans.

**Arthur Seyss-Inquart, an urbane and accomplished Austrian lawyer was courted by Hitler to facilitate the Anschluss. But his place in infamy was earned as *Reichskommissioner* for the Netherlands.**

**A**RTHUR Seyss-Inquart, Austrian lawyer, National Socialist politician and later Reich Commissioner for the Netherlands was born in Stannern bei Iglau, Bohemia (now Jihlava, Czech Republic) on 22 July 1892, the son of a teacher.

In World War I he served as an officer in the elite *Tyrol-Kaiserjäger* of the Imperial

Austrian Army and was badly wounded. In 1918 he joined the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* – The German Brotherhood – an organisation that promoted anti-Semitic and anti-Free Mason doctrines. After he had trained as a lawyer at Vienna University he began practising as a Doctor of Law in 1921 in the city. He became a champion of Austrian *Anschluss* (Union) with Germany and became involved with

nationalist associations including the Austrian-German National League and the *Steirischen Heimatschutzes* – Styrian Homeland Defence.

### SECRET NAZI

He became associated with the Austrian Nazi Party in 1931, and when he became a state councillor in the Austrian government in May 1937 he worked covertly to assist Hitler. Seyss-Inquart was at pains to explain that he in effect had joined the Party at that time. As a lawyer he found a convoluted way of explaining his Party membership. He later claimed to have asked Dr Kier in December 1931 “to take care of my relation to the Party.” He became a member of *Steirischen Heimatschutzes*, and he pressed party leader von Habicht to state that its members were also

members of the Nazi Party. His insistence on this fact in later years was to ensure that he was not seen as a ‘March Violet’, as those who became Nazis after 1933 were called.

“After that I paid my membership fees and, as I remember, direct to the *Gau Wien* (Vienna). The payments were made even after the Party was forbidden... that proves that I felt myself, in every respect, as a member of the Party and as I said before I was regarded as belonging to the Party already in December 1931.”

### AUSTRIAN ASSASSIN

Following the attempted Austrian Nazi coup in July 1934 in which Chancellor Engelbert Dolfuss was murdered, the party was banned and Seyss-Inquart worked to support individual National Socialists as a lawyer. The new





Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg then made Seyss-Inquart a state councillor, primarily because he saw the nationalist but conservative, church going Seyss-Inquart as a possible bridge between the government and the right wing.

According to Seyss-Inquart, both Chancellors Dolfuss and Kurt von Schuschnigg favoured Austrian union with Germany, but not with the Austrian Nazis in control. In an attempt to stave off the pressure from the Nazis Dolfuss had founded the Austro-fascist 'Fatherland Front' which co-operated with Italy. Von Schuschnigg, who followed him found that Mussolini would not back Austria in its confrontation with Germany.

## SEYSS AS JUDAS

Seyss-Inquart did not openly reveal his Nazi loyalties until 12 February 1938, after Schuschnigg endured a bullying meeting with Hitler at Berchtesgarden. Schuschnigg had appointed Seyss-Inquart Minister of the Interior and Security, and the new minister used his authority to prevent the police from opposing Nazi factions within Austria before the *Anschluss*.

Schuschnigg attempted to renege on the agreement to accept Germany's protection, citing the result of a plebiscite on Austrian independence. Hitler used this to justify the invasion of Austria. When on 1 March, following pressure from Germany, Seyss-Inquart was made Chancellor his first act was to request assistance from German troops, who were in fact already on the march.

Seyss-Inquart joined the German Nazi Party on 13 March 1938. Membership allowed him access to posts within Greater Germany. On 15 March at Vienna's Heldenplatz Hitler announced amid thunderous jubilation "the entry of my homeland into the German Reich." A day later Seyss-Inquart was made *Reichsstatthalter* of Ostmark, as Austria was now called, and held this post until



*Returning to Vienna after being seriously wounded in the Great War, Seyss-Inquart became a successful lawyer and politician. He also became a fervent advocate of a political union between Austria and Germany, cultivating close ties with the Austrian Nazi Party in the process.*

30 April 1939. On 15 May 1939 he was made a Reich Minister without portfolio and given the rank of *SS-Obergruppenführer*. The SS rank clearly meant a great deal to him, and his photographs show him in both the black and the later field grey uniform. He was a member of the Reichstag from April 1938 to 8 May 1945.

Early in September 1939 he was made Chief of the Civil Administration in Southern Poland. From 12 October 1939 to May 1940 he was deputy to Hans Frank in the newly established *Gouvernement-General* in Poland. There he was responsible for surveying the district of Lublin as a potential future site for a Jewish ghetto.

However, Seyss-Inquart's notoriety is based on his role as Netherlands *Reichskommissar*, from 18 May 1940 to 8 May 1945. He was assisted by another Austrian Nazi. H. A. Rauter, hand picked by Hitler, was head of the SS and security police.

From offices in the centre of The Hague they ran a stern colonial administration, laying down in minute detail what their conquered Dutch subjects were and were not to do.

## JEWISH ROUND-UP

Both were quick to enforce anti-Jewish laws, and Dutch Jews were among the first to be obliged to wear the Star of David. All Jews were registered in 1941,

and deportations began in 1942.

Seyss-Inquart and Rauter drafted forced labour to work in the Reich, confiscated valuable works of art and subordinated the Dutch economy to Germany's. As the war progressed harsher measures were introduced, the deportation of Jews that had begun in June 1942 accelerated. More than 100,000 of a population of 140,000 were sent east to die in the death camps. Many of those who stayed managed to evade the authorities either by their own or their friends efforts.

When Jewish academics were barred from the University of Leyden, as part of the Aryanisation of public and





*Above: As Reich Commissioner of the Netherlands from 18 May 1940, Arthur Seyss-Inquart was the supreme civil power of the German government in Holland. Directly subordinate to Hitler, he enjoyed complete legislative authority.*

*Below: The intelligent and outwardly pleasant Viennese lawyer was selected by Chancellor Schuschnigg to negotiate with Hitler on aligning Austria and Germany more closely. But like a Trojan Horse Seyss-Inquart had his own agenda, which went much further than mere alignment.*



*Above: Seyss-Inquart succeeded Schuschnigg as Chancellor on 2 March 1938. He only held the position for four days – just long enough for the Germans to take over the government, absorbing Austria as the new province of Ostmark in the Greater German Reich.*

professional life in Holland, the non-Jewish professors objected publicly. Seyss-Inquart responded by ordering that the ancient and highly respected university be closed down.

The severe anti-Jewish measures provoked a general strike in February 1942. Holland had a long tradition of tolerance, and every class took part – it even united the Communists with the Catholic and Calvinist churches.

Seyss-Inquart reacted brutally ordering the execution of seventeen Dutchmen. Fifteen of these men had been arrested for sabotaging a cruiser under construction near Rotterdam. For the Dutch these deaths caused widespread revulsion – the country had abolished capital punishment in 1870.

## STRIKE FOR FREEDOM

Between April and May 1943 there was a second strike when the Germans attempted to re-arrest thousands of former Dutch PoWs who had been released and returned home. The strike was smashed at a cost of 150 lives, but the ex-POWs remained free.

So much food and so many goods were extracted from the Dutch economy towards the end

of the war that in those areas that had not been liberated, the harsh 'Hunger' Winter of 1944-45 saw 16,000 die of starvation. Even basic needs such as sugar beet, critical for the large cities in the west, were blocked. This had the effect of pushing the population below subsistence level.

## INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

At Nuremberg, Seyss-Inquart compared favourably with the other high-ranking Nazi officials. His trim bearing and bespectacled face made him appear outwardly pleasant. He was more intelligent than most of those on trial, and in an IQ test he scored the second highest marks after Schacht. But he had squandered his intelligence in serving his own needs and those of his brutal masters. During a long series of interrogations after his arrest he repented of the "fearful excesses" of Nazism, but any remorse he felt did him little good.

Found guilty of mass deportations, summary executions and the shooting of hostages he was hanged on 16 October 1946. A few days before his execution he learned that his son, missing on the Eastern Front, had been found alive.





# Rape of the Netherlands

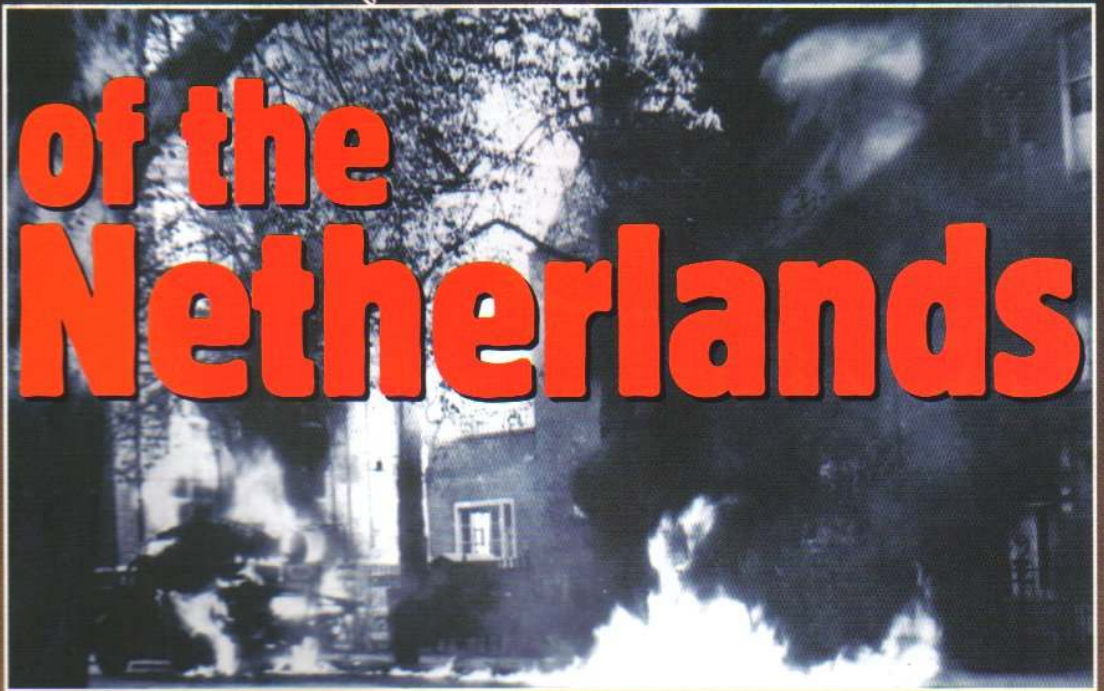
ON 15 MAY 1940, five days after Germany's invasion of the Low Countries, the Netherlands surrendered. Five years of brutal Nazi occupation now began.

German rule was characterised by the persecution of the large Jewish community followed by the deportation of many Dutch nationals to work on distant Reich building projects. The Nazis also attempted a racial assimilation of Holland's supposedly Germanic inhabitants.

The more draconian the occupation, the greater the displays of nationalist solidarity. The Germans even succeeded in achieving the impossible by uniting communists and Church groups in opposition.

The Allied invasion of France did not end the suffering. Between September 1944 and the surrender of German forces on 5 May 1945 the Nazis turned the country north of the Rhine delta into a fortress. Many thousands of Dutch civilians died during this period, from starvation and through summary executions in reprisal for widespread sabotage.

*Above: Holland suffered German occupation for longer than any other European country save Norway. But the Dutch were not passive victims: they organised a number of nation-wide strikes in protest against Seyss-Inquart's intolerant civilian administration. All such actions were ruthlessly suppressed.*



*Above: Holland's appeal to the racially obsessed Nazis was the 'superior' blood of the Dutch people, certifiably 100% Aryan. This meant that interbreeding with the Dutch would do nothing to harm the racial purity of the new German super-nation.*

*Below: The bridge at Arnhem. On 17 September 1944 – just as a massive Allied airborne operation began – the Dutch government-in-exile ordered a national strike in Holland. In reprisal Seyss-Inquart reduced the population's rations to starvation levels.*



*Above: At the end of war, Seyss-Inquart began negotiations with the Allies to ease the suffering of the Dutch population. This cynically motivated attempt to save his own skin counted for nothing at Nuremberg, where he died on the gallows.*

*Below: Dutch resistance was slow to start, but once organised quickly gained momentum. The German response to terrorist action was to send 30,000 Dutch civilians to concentration camps, and to summarily execute 2,000 others in Holland itself.*



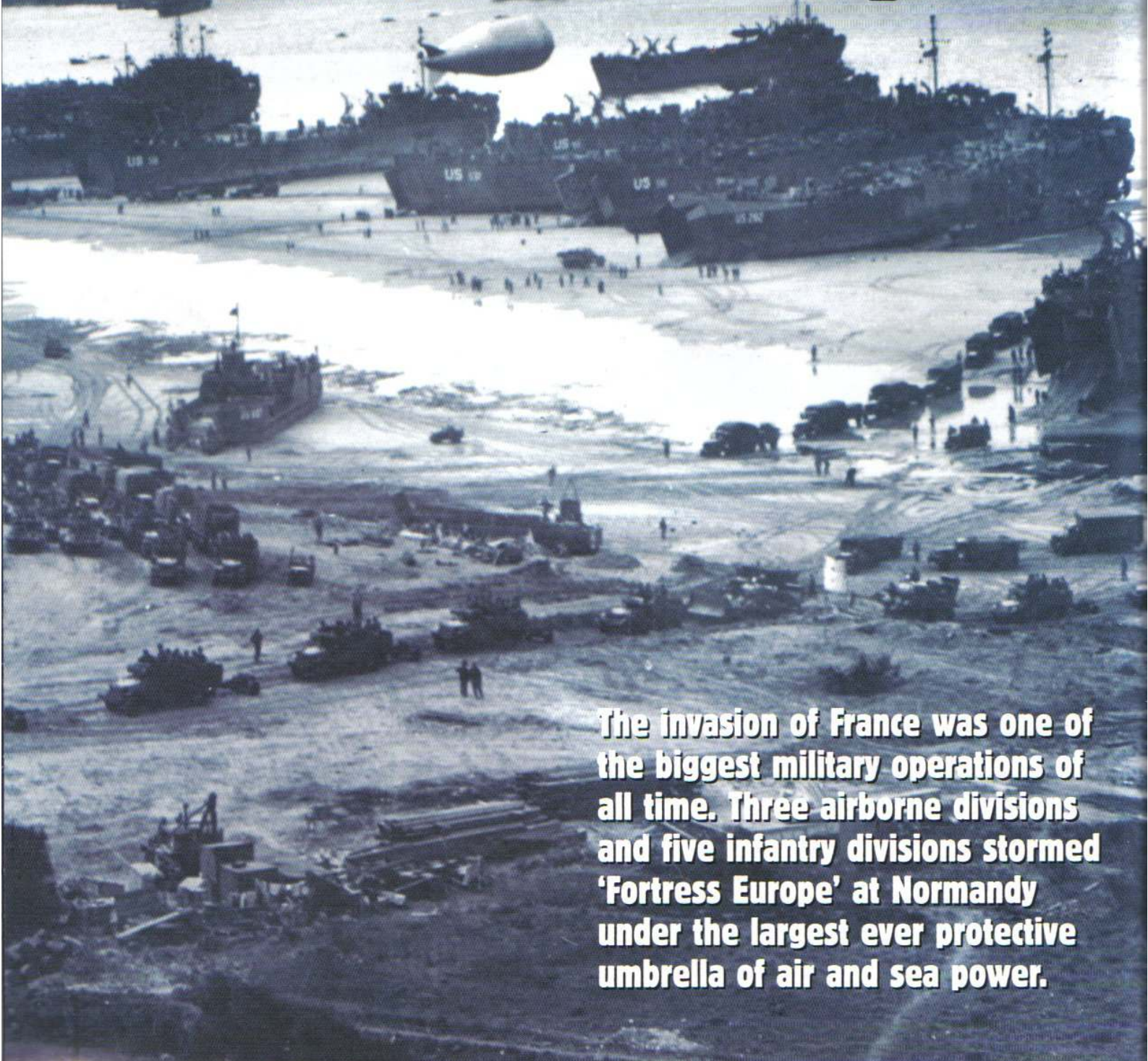




*The invasion of Normandy was the greatest seaborne military operation in history. It required nearly 5,000 craft of a hundred different types to land more than five divisions on the first day alone.*

# D-DAY

## Axis catastrophe



**The invasion of France was one of the biggest military operations of all time. Three airborne divisions and five infantry divisions stormed 'Fortress Europe' at Normandy under the largest ever protective umbrella of air and sea power.**





*Although the Allied invasion of Europe had long been expected, it came as something of a surprise when it actually happened. Faced with a storm of fire from an Allied force which commanded sea and sky, German units could do little but take cover and survive.*



**T**HE SIGHT that was indescribable... between the last barge and the shore was a pier formed by piles of dead men. It was impossible to reach the shore without treading on the dead, and the sea around the cove was red with blood."

Thus did a young British officer of World War I describe Winston Churchill's first try at an amphibious landing. The slaughter at Gallipoli – there was so much blood in the water that it could be seen from the air – weighed heavily on the British prime minister's mind when it came to planning the liberation of France. But Hitler's 'Atlantic Wall,' bristling with concrete bunkers and minefields, was far more formidable than the Turkish defences at the Dardanelles.

And the political stakes were higher. Gallipoli cost Churchill his job as First Sea Lord in 1915; if the Allied invasion of France was defeated, would a second attempt even be considered?

Hitler could not stop the Allies from landing. By early 1944 the Luftwaffe was losing control of the skies over the Reich itself. *Luftflotte 3* had 820 aircraft on 6 June, of which 170 were serviceable; the Allies committed over 5,000, flying some 10,000 sorties on that day alone. The *Kriegsmarine* readied its submarine flotillas at Brest and Lorient for what was recognised as a suicide mission; the bulk of the submarine force had already been withdrawn to Norway. S-boats and a handful of destroyers stood no chance of obstructing an invasion fleet 5,000 vessels strong, manned by over a quarter of a million men. Nine Allied battleships, 23 cruisers and 73 destroyers were assigned to shore bombardment missions alone.

## TARGET NORMANDY

So the Allies would have to be beaten ashore. But where? And how? Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, Commander-in-Chief of the German army in the west,

believed the invasion would take place in the Pas de Calais area, where the Channel is at its narrowest. The Germans would have less time to react once the invasion fleet had been detected, and, once a beachhead had been secured, Rundstedt feared the enemy could reach the Rhine in four days. Inland lay good tank country.

Normandy he ruled out because inland it was dominated by the *bocage*: narrow lanes and high hedgerows ideal for defence. And there were no major ports, which were assumed essential. The Allies' 'Mulberry' artificial harbours would come as a disagreeable surprise.

His conclusion was reinforced by German intelligence, which reported a major concentration of Allied troops in the south-east of England. The First US Army Group or FUSAG was commanded by none other than General George S Patton – the one general in the British and American armies that the Germans really feared.

Hitler agreed with his commanders, and the Pas de Calais sector received the bulk of the new fortifications and the strongest concentration of troops.

## SWEPT FROM THE SKIES

But it would be difficult to beat the Allies since they would have uncontested control of the air. Although the Luftwaffe could still make devastating local attacks in the East, it could do very little to contribute to the ground battle in France.

Field Marshal Rommel, who had endured similar conditions for more than a year in Africa, believed the Allies had to be destroyed on the beaches. Once a beachhead was established, under that all-powerful air umbrella, he had little confidence that the German army could throw the invaders back into the sea. He wanted panzer divisions positioned near enough to the coast to intervene within hours, not days.

Von Rundstedt disagreed. He planned a conventional defence





**Above:** A German 88-mm gun battery in action as the understrength Germans attempted to maintain a ring of steel around the invasion beachhead. In spite of their efforts, the Allies quickly built up men and material in preparation for the almost inevitable breakout.

**Below:** In the run up to D-Day Field Marshal Rommel was tireless in his duties, preparing the defences in France against an Allied invasion. Here he confers with General Meindl, who commanded the 3rd and 5th Parachute Divisions in Brittany.



**Below:** The overall quality of the German troops along the invasion front was not high, even when braced by experienced SS units as seen here. The invasion front was just too long to be adequately defended by the Reich's depleted armies. This was obvious even to the OKW, where the prevailing strategy was to maintain a large reserve to throw against the Allies once the main invasion site was known.



which accepted that the Allies would probably succeed in landing. Once the Germans had identified the enemy's main thrust, he would counter-attack with a concentrated blow led by the panzer divisions.

He accepted that movement behind the lines by day would be vulnerable to air attack, but most divisions received additional anti-aircraft gun batteries. In May 1944 an officer from 12. SS *Panzerdivision Hitlerjugend* had the idea of mounting the *Flakvierling* quadruple 20 mm anti-aircraft gun system on to a Panzer IV chassis: the resulting 'Wirbelwind' self-propelled flak unit was rushed into production on Hitler's orders.

Above all, the German high command trusted the training and discipline of their men – particularly their night fighting ability – to smash the invasion before the Allies could bring their superior numbers to bear.

## SECOND LINE TROOPS

It bears repeating that the bulk of the German army remained on the Russian Front where the Red Army was poised to launch five operations, each of which was larger than 'Overlord.' Of the 285 divisions available to Hitler, 164 were in the East compared to 60 in the West. And half of the latter were poor quality infantry divisions, filled out with wounded, semi-invalids, older men (a quarter of the German army was aged over 34 by 1944) and foreign troops of dubious loyalty. Many divisions included a battalion of former Soviet troops, 'volunteers' for the anti-Communist army RONA whose reliability was increasingly suspect as the Red Army's westward advance continued.

The infantry divisions had an impossibly long coastline to defend. In north-east France divisional sectors averaged 50 miles; along the Normandy coast they were 120 miles long, rising to more than 200 miles along the shores of the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

German hopes in France

rested on 11 armoured and four airborne divisions, the paratroops functioning as elite ground troops rather than in their intended role. Across the Channel were the equivalent of 50 divisions, including 21 American, 15 British, three Canadian and one each from Poland and France.

As commander of Army Group 'B', Field Marshal Rommel threw himself into the task of making the 'Atlantic Wall' of Goebbels' propaganda a truly effective shield. Slave labour combined 17 million cubic yards of concrete with 1.5 million tons of iron to build a network of bunkers, pillboxes, observation towers and machine gun nests. Anti-tank ditches were dug inland; steel girders were fixed at low water to impale incoming landing craft.

But his disagreement with von Rundstedt over how to fight the battle was never resolved. Hitler assigned some panzer divisions to Rommel, others to Rundstedt's reserve, but decreed that none could move without his personal authorisation.

In the months leading up to D-Day the Allied air forces systematically bombed the French railway system. Bridges, marshalling yards, and key junctions were attacked in a campaign that cost the lives of some 10,000 French civilians. The result was that German reinforcements found it slow going to get to the front. The 9th and 10th SS *Panzergrénadier* divisions took as long to cross France as they did travelling from Russia to the Franco-German border.

## ALLIED DECEPTION

Radar installations were knocked out one by one in the final days. Only one survived on 6 June: the station at Calais detected a massive radar contact crossing the sea at an apparent speed of eight knots. The invasion fleet!

But it was another Allied 'spoof.' The Calais station had been spared deliberately. Lancasters of 617 Squadron and Stirlings of 218 Squadron flew





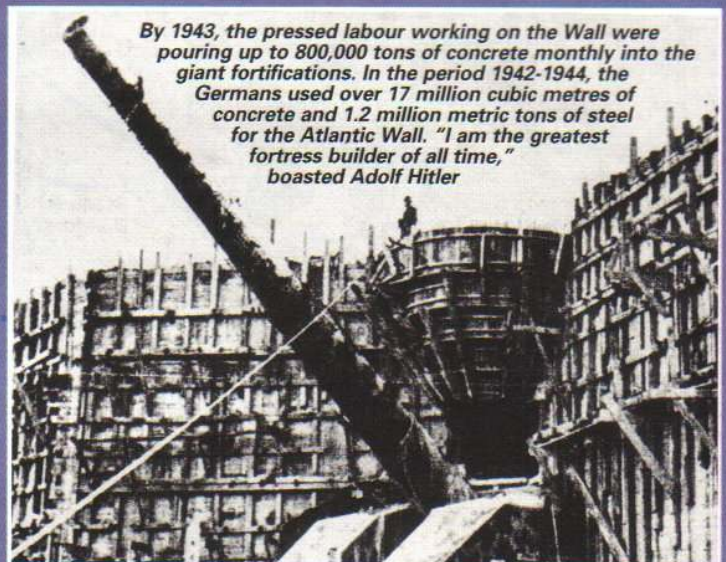
## Atlantic Wall

IN DECEMBER 1941, Adolf Hitler boasted to the world that his Third Reich controlled the entire west coast of Europe from the Arctic Ocean to the Bay of Biscay. "It is my unshakable decision," the Fuhrer added, "to make this front impregnable against every enemy." To keep his vow, Hitler conceived of an awesome defence line – a broad band of concrete, steel, guns and troops that would follow the shoreline for 2,400 miles. He called it the Atlantic Wall. In the next two and a half years a quarter of a million men from *Organisation Todt* worked on it night and day. It became an obsessive project for Hitler. For the Allied invasion planners it became the most formidable defensive barrier of the War.

*Left: The impressive propaganda images in German magazines did not reflect reality. The commander in the Pas de Calais area admitted that the Wall was, at best, a "thin, in many places fragile, length of cord with a few small knots at isolated points."*



The foundations for some of the largest German coastal artillery emplacements along the French coast were laid as early as 1940. These gun positions in the Pas de Calais were intended to support a German invasion of Britain. Subsequently, they fired on Allied shipping in the Channel and regularly shelled Dover, Folkestone and elsewhere along the British coast.



By 1943, the pressed labour working on the Wall were pouring up to 800,000 tons of concrete monthly into the giant fortifications. In the period 1942-1944, the Germans used over 17 million cubic metres of concrete and 1.2 million metric tons of steel for the Atlantic Wall. "I am the greatest fortress builder of all time," boasted Adolf Hitler



Some 15,000 bunkers and other installations protected harbours and points along the French coast where there were important facilities or likely landing spots. In some instances the Germans used elaborate camouflage schemes to avoid detection by Allied reconnaissance aircraft.





# Allied Landing





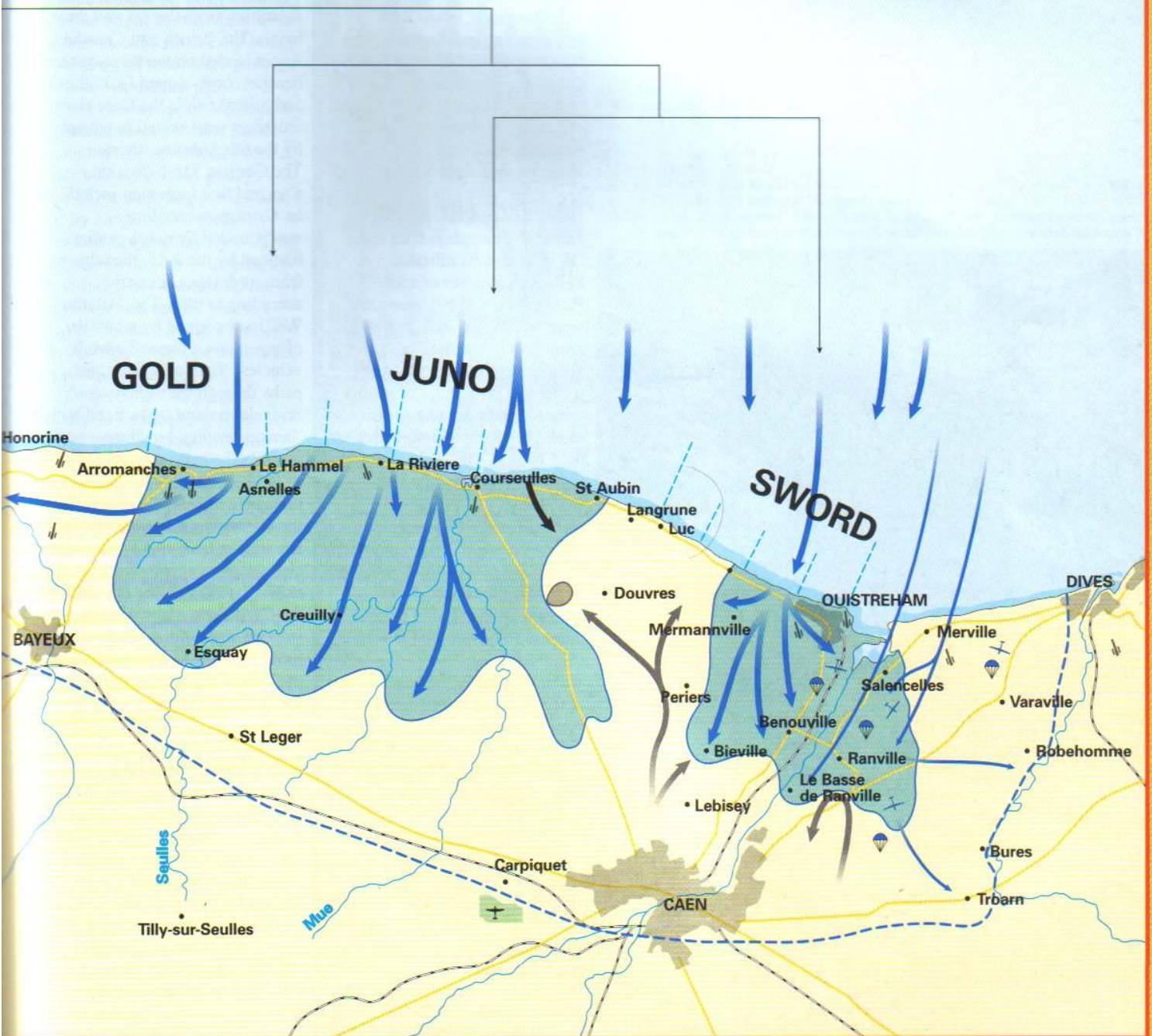


# in Normandy

Operation OVERLORD

21 ARMY GROUP  
(MONTGOMERY)

BRITISH SECOND ARMY  
(DEMPSEY)







**Above:** By 2400 hours on Decision Day the Allies had taken their first German prisoners. The Allied attack was not expected on the Normandy coast and the troops garrisoned there were not of great quality.

**Below:** Two first class field commanders, neither of whom had the answer to the conundrum posed by the Allies. Rundstedt (right) wanted to let the Allies land and then concentrate his reserves for a knock-out blow to force them back into the sea. Rommel wanted to destroy the Allies on the beaches. By the end of July Rommel would be lying critically ill and Rundstedt had been replaced for his failure to stop the Allies.



low over the sea, dropping patterns of 'window', strips of foil that appeared as a mass of radar reflections, while a flotilla of small boats fitted with radar reflectors made for France.

At 04.00hrs the two 'fleets' lay off the coast, broadcasting the sounds of anchors rattling through hawsepipes from behind a thick smokescreen. Then they turned for home.

Thus in the early hours of 6 June German commanders had reports of landings from Calais and Normandy, while RAF bombers dropped dummy paratroopers to further confuse the issue. They assumed that the real attack would come at Calais, even after they knew the Allies were ashore in strength.. Normandy must be a feint.

## NON-EXISTENT ARMY

Not until many days later did OKW realise its mistake. FUSAG had never existed. Patton's tours of his 'command' were widely reported, but his army group consisted of dummy vehicles, empty barracks and some very busy radio operators whose stream of radio traffic was monitored from the other side of the Channel. The *Abwehr* spy network in Britain had been eliminated. Luftwaffe reconnaissance flights were few and far between; the real invasion forces along the south coast were heavily camouflaged while FUSAG units exposed huge dummy supply dumps to aerial observation.

The timing of the attack added to the German surprise, since the weather seemed so hostile. But since German weather ships had been swept from the Atlantic, the Allies had the advantage in forecasting – they knew a break in the weather was on its way.

When the landings began, Rommel was in Germany, visiting his wife, many junior officers were away, ironically on an anti-invasion staff exercise – and Hitler was asleep.

Hitler was still asleep by the middle of the morning, by which time Rommel's staff had

badgered Rundstedt to request the Führer's permission to commit the panzers. No-one dared wake him.

It was not until the late afternoon of 6 June that the nearest armoured unit was given permission to move – which meant that Rommel's defensive strategy had collapsed before the battle had really begun.

## ON TO THE BEACH

The landings took place on a 100-km front, with five divisions assaulting from the sea and three by air. The British and Canadian forces landed on the three eastern beaches, code-named Gold, Juno and Sword, while the Orne river crossings were seized in advance by the 6th Airborne division. The German 716th division – a second line formation including an *Ostruppen* battalion – was pounded by naval gunfire, bombed by the RAF, then driven from its defences exactly according to plan. The 'Atlantic Wall' was pierced by a number of ingenious armoured assault vehicles: 'flail' tanks that beat paths through the minefields, bridgelayers and tanks fitted with 'bunker busting' howitzers.

Only the belated intervention of the 21st Panzer Division prevented a complete disaster for the Germans. Once unleashed, the veteran tank unit acted with characteristic aggression and skill. 21st PD counter-attacked the Canadians, and was only stopped short of the beach by naval gunfire. As a result the city of Caen, a key Allied objective for D-Day, was held by the Germans.

## HOLDING THE LINE

At the extreme west of the Allied line, Utah beach was seized to facilitate a rapid advance towards the vital port of Cherbourg. Defended by elements of the second-line 709th Infantry Division, it was within reach of several first-line units, notably the 91st Infantry Division and the 6th *Fallschirmjäger* regiment. However, such was the confusion caused by the American airborne



assaults – scattered across the battlefield to the bewilderment of both sides – neither German formation reacted in time.

Only at Omaha beach did the Allies face determined resistance. Allied intelligence had not detected the recent arrival of the German 352nd Infantry Division, a battle-hardened formation fresh from the Russian Front. A last minute raid by 480 B-24 heavy bombers looked spectacular, but the bombs fell too far inland. Naval bombardment damaged some positions, but a few newly built machine gun nests were not included in the fire plan.

The first waves of US troops suffered hideous losses. Small groups of men eventually found their way up various gulleys – one of the storming parties was led by Brigadier-General Norman D Cota, deputy commander of the 29th Infantry Division. They outflanked the pillboxes and one by one, the gun positions fell silent. Follow-on waves of troops came ashore in relative safety.

Of the 35,000 US troops landed at Omaha on 6 June, 2,200 became casualties. The German 352nd division retreated grudgingly, contesting every feature without giving way. Of its 6,000 men, some 1,200 were killed, wounded or captured.

## ROAD TO BERLIN

Hitler's plan had failed. The Allies had put 170,000 men ashore by the end of the first day, losing fewer than 5,000 in the process. Thanks to the Mulberry harbour system, they were then able to feed troops and supplies into the beachhead almost as quickly as if they had captured a port. By contrast, German units ordered to Normandy found it next to impossible to move by day, due to the incessant Allied air attacks. The Allied armies in Normandy grew faster than the Germans'. A month after D-Day there were a million Allied troops in France. The ghost of Gallipoli had been laid to rest.

*The Martin B-26 Marauder provided much of the medium bomber support at Normandy. A tricky aircraft to fly because of its high wing loading, the B-26 nevertheless packed a heavy punch.*



*Above: The Hawker Typhoon was the RAF's primary ground-attack aircraft. It was employed in 'taxi rank' attacks – squadrons loitered over the battlefield until called down by the ground troops. It could respond quickly, delivering pinpoint attacks with four 20-mm cannon and bombs or rockets.*

*Below: Railways were an inviting target, as this Typhoon pilot has found. Large numbers of heavily-armed Allied fighters roamed the battlefield, having a major impact on the German counter-attacks.*



*Above: The Douglas A-20 Boston/Havoc was an extremely versatile light bomber, also used in large numbers in support of the Normandy invasion. To aid in recognition, all Allied aircraft involved in operations on the Normandy front were painted with prominent black and white 'invasion' stripes.*

*Below: The Luftwaffe mounted fewer than 300 sorties on 6 June – compared with 14,674 Allied missions. With no air force the Wehrmacht depended for its survival upon flak, guile and the cover of night.*





The Junkers Ju 88 vies with the British Mosquito as the most versatile combat aircraft of World War II. Designed as a specialised high-speed bomber, it proved suited for virtually every type of combat mission, and was built in greater numbers than all other Luftwaffe bombers combined. These are Ju 88A-4 bombers, one of the most numerous of all variants, serving with III Gruppe of Lehrgeschwader 1 in the Mediterranean in 1941/2.



# JUNKERS Ju 88

## SCHNELL BOMBER

**'The Fuhrer does not ask me what kind of bombers I have. He simply wants to know how many'**  
– Hermann Goering

**O**N 10 MARCH 1935 the British *Daily Mail* published an interview with Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering in which he admitted what defence analysts had known for years: Germany had defied the terms of the Versailles Treaty by establishing a military air arm. The Luftwaffe, whose formation had been officially announced the

preceding day, had existed in secret for some time

In April Hitler nationalised Germany's leading aircraft manufacturer, Junkers. The firm, in which the government had acquired a 51% stake in 1933, was already supplying military transport versions of its Ju 52 airliner. Its most famous aircraft, the Ju 87 Stuka dive bomber, was poised to enter series production. The next Junkers aircraft, the

Ju 88, was never a public name like the Stuka, but it was destined to play a far more significant role in the war.

Like other major air forces in the mid-1930s, the Luftwaffe developed a series of twin-engined bombers that were capable of out-pacing the biplane fighters still in widespread service. The Dornier Do 17 and Heinkel He 111 both began life as civil aircraft with an eye to future military applications and both were tested in action during the Spanish Civil War. But the pace of technological progress was extraordinarily rapid during this period. The need for a purpose-built bomber to replace them both was apparent even as they entered service. The

objective was to increase both speed and bomb load, and the RLM (*Reichsluftfahrtministerium* – German air ministry) issued a demanding specification for just such a machine. The initial design for the Ju 88, the *Schnellbomber* (fast bomber), comfortably exceeded the specifications. The fifth prototype established an international speed record in 1939, carrying a 2,000 kg (4,409 lb) payload at an average speed of 517 km/h (321 mph) over a distance of 1,000 km (621 miles). This was very close to the maximum speed of the Hawker Hurricane which equipped the majority of RAF fighter squadrons at the time.

Professor Hugo Junkers, the aging head of the company, was





*Above: An early Ju 88A runs up its engines before taking off for a mission over England. The aircraft carries a pair of SC 500 (500-kg) bombs on racks between the engines and the fuselage. Two internal bomb bays carried a maximum of 28 smaller 50-kg high-explosive bombs.*

*Right: The Ju 88 had been designed as a fast bomber able to use its speed to keep out of trouble. However, it proved vulnerable to more modern single-seat fighters, and Junkers had to squeeze extra defensive armament into the bomber's already crowded cockpit.*



replaced. The professor had been due to retire anyway, but his open opposition to Hitler saw him ejected forthwith. He was replaced by Dr Heinz Koppenberg, a ruthless manager from the steel industry.

## INDUSTRIAL OVERLOAD

Koppenberg did his best to overhaul the labour-intensive manufacturing methods he discovered in the aviation business. However, he never fully overcame traditional working practices or the culture that led to a non-aviation engineer at Henschel to query whether it was really necessary to have eleven different types of countersunk rivets on the same aircraft.

American methods of mass-production were never adopted and German aircraft would continue to require more man-hours and more skilled labour than their US equivalents. Productivity was hampered even more severely by constant changes to the design dictated by the air ministry.

The outbreak of war failed to shake German industry into high gear. Indeed, Hitler switched production priorities to the army and navy during 1940, reducing aircraft production across the board. Even the belated mobilisation of industry achieved by Albert Speer did not make the best of the civilian sector. The giant Opel car plant began to manufacture parts for the Ju 88,

but never built a complete aircraft despite huge resources and a skilled labour force.

## ALLIED FLEXIBILITY

By contrast, British factories switched from buses to tanks or aircraft in accordance with pre-war plans. In America, the

contrast was even greater: General Motors built Grumman carrier aircraft, while Ford built complex B-24 bombers at the specially-built Willow Run facility. In 1944, the factory reached Henry Ford's self-imposed target of one four-engined bomber an hour!



# Junkers Ju 88A-5

## Bombsights

The Ju 88 had two sets of bombsights. The bomb aimer had a sight in the nose for use in conventional bombing attacks. The pilot also had a sight for use in dive-bombing attacks. Mounted on the cockpit canopy, it swung to one side when not in use.



## Powerplant

The A-5 model of the Ju 88 was powered by two of the same Jumo 211 G-1 engines used in the original production models, mated to the more efficient wing developed for the Ju 88A-4. It actually preceded the A-4 into service, due to development delays in the production of the latter's more powerful Jumo 211J engines.

*Below: British engineers examine a captured Ju 88. The cramped cockpit for the four-man crew was noteworthy: The Germans accepted slightly less efficiency and increased vulnerability to a single hit, believing in the morale value of having the crew in close contact.*



Under the lackadaisical Goering and tragically miscast Ernst Udet, the Ju 88 was subject to continuous interference by various interested parties. It required the construction of 100 prototype and pre-production aircraft between 1936 and 1939 before the Ju 88 entered service. There were some 250,000 technical changes made between the flight of the first prototype in December 1936 and the completion of the sixth in 1938.

## NEEDLESS COMPLEXITY

This was typical of the pre-war Luftwaffe, which continued to change the specification of aircraft after they were taken into service, even over very small production runs. For instance, though only 500 Arado Ar 68 fighters were ordered, they were delivered in a dozen variants that featured four different types of power plant and three different radio sets.

At least the Ju 88 was merely

delayed. The Ju 89 heavy bomber, planned for 1942-44 was cancelled after its champion, *Generalleutnant* Walter Wever was killed in an accident in a Heinkel He 70. While British and American plans for four-engined heavy bombers matured, the Luftwaffe was committed to a strategy of medium bombers only. And whereas the Heinkel He 111 and Dornier Do 17 were conventional level bombers, the Ju 88 had to double as a dive-bomber. Large slatted dive-brakes were added under the outer wings. Four 500 kg (1,102-lb) bombs could be carried on hardpoints under the wings; maximum load was 28 SC50 50 kg (110-lb) bombs. Problems with overloading on the final pre-production aircraft led to wing-spar failures and undercarriage collapses. Even the first service aircraft had to be flown carefully.

The four-man crew were squashed together in the same style as the Dornier Do 17. The





## 9.Staffel, Kampfgeschwader 30 Gilze Rijen, Holland, 1941

### Unit markings

This Junkers Ju 88 wears the codes of KG 30, which was the first unit to take the *Schnellbomber* into action in September 1939. For much of the war the *Geschwader* concentrated on anti-shipping missions in the North Sea, from bases in Holland, Denmark and Norway.



### Junkers Ju 88A-4

**Powerplant:** two 1,350 hp Junkers Jumo 211J-1 engines

**Performance:** maximum speed 470 km/h (292 mph) at 5300 m (17,390 ft); maximum cruising speed 400 km/h (248 mph) at 5000 m (16,405 ft); maximum range 2730 km (1,696 miles)

**Weights:** empty equipped 9860 kg (21,737 lb); maximum take-off 14000 kg (30,865 lb)

**Dimensions:** span 20 m (65 ft 7 in); length 14.4 m (47 ft 2 in); height 4.85 m (15 ft 11 in); wing area 54.5 m<sup>2</sup> (586.6 sq ft)

**Armament:** one forward-firing 7.92-mm machine gun, one forward-firing 13-mm machine gun, up to 2 x 13-mm machine guns aft and one or two in the ventral gondola. Maximum bombload 4000 kg (4,409 lb)

### Ju 88 production:

Sept-Dec 1939: 69, 1940: 2538, 1941: 3348, 1942: 3661, 1943: 3654, 1944: 3286, 1945: 355

**Total: 16,911**

### Mine warfare

The Luftminen Type B was a dual purpose weapon for use as a mine at sea or as a delayed action bomb on land. It was parachute-retarded, to ensure that the weapon was not damaged when it entered the water and to avoid premature detonation on land.

British felt that this made sense from a morale point of view – the isolation of rear-gunners in certain RAF bombers was notorious. However, the crew compartment in the German aircraft was terribly cramped.

### CREW COMPARTMENT

The pilot sat high on the left with the bomb aimer low on the right; on some versions the latter sat up higher, doubling as a second pilot. The engineer was seated behind the pilot and facing aft so he could man the rearward-firing 7.92-mm machine gun(s). The radio operator sat alongside, but lower in the fuselage, ready to squeeze into the gondola to operate the rearward-firing 7.92-mm belly gun.

The ambitious 1938 RLM production programme called for 54 bomber squadrons, all equipped with Ju 88s by the spring of 1942. Supplemented by 4 squadrons of He 177 heavy bombers and 8 with Stukas (to be

replaced by Messerschmitt Me 210s) the 7,327 Junkers bombers would provide the main striking force of the Luftwaffe. However, it took longer than anticipated to tool up factories, expand the labour force and secure the raw materials. It was against this background that Goering saw off attempts to revive heavy bombers, observing “the Fuhrer does not ask me what kind of bombers I have. He simply wants to know how many.” More realistic production targets were set in August 1939: the Ju 88 was still earmarked as the main bomber with a target total of 2,460 to be complete by April 1941 and production to continue at 300 per month thereafter.

### SLOW PRODUCTION

It was one thing for Goering’s advisors to conjure up a vision of the world’s largest air force, with swastikas on every fin. It was another to actually do it

Since it was manufactured by several sub-contractors on many different sites, final production figures are uncertain. Figures given by different sources range from 14,780 (including 104 prototypes) to just under 19,000 (Henschel figures).

**Below:** The only defence of a Ju 88 bomber against a multi-gunned single-seat fighter single diving down from astern was a pair of machine guns at the rear of the cockpit. A single gun in the ventral gondola also provided some protection to the aircraft’s underside.



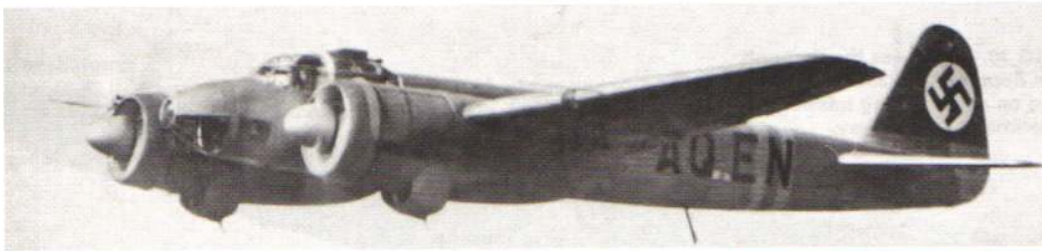
Manufacturing output crept up, but failed to soar. On the eve of the war, 31 August 1939, there were only eighteen Ju 88s in the Luftwaffe’s first line inventory, compared to nearly 800 He 111s and 250 Do 17s. Both Heinkel and Dornier types were kept in

production during 1940 to compensate for the shortfall in Ju 88 numbers – in fact, the Heinkel He 111 remained in production almost to the end of the war.

The Ju 88 acquitted itself well during the campaign in the West in 1940. It was the best of the



# HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



*Left: The prototype Ju 88 first flew on 21 December 1936. By 1938 it had been declared the winner of the Luftwaffe's Schnellbomber or 'Fast bomber' competition – in spite of the fact that this aircraft crashed in April 1937, very early in the test programme. Orders for production tooling were placed in 1938, with subcontracts going to Arado, Heinkel, Henschel, Dornier and Volkswagen.*



*Above: Even as Junkers was delivering plans of the Ju 88 to the Reichsluftfahrtministerium in 1936, the company was suggesting an improved model with more powerful engines and an enlarged, streamlined crew compartment. The Ju 88B seen here remained a prototype, but it was to be developed into the powerful Ju 188.*

*Right: After 1940 the Ju 88 became the mainstay of the Luftwaffe's bomber force, and the aircraft and its crews featured heavily in the numerous colour propaganda magazines the Germans published.*

*Below: The Ju 88A-17 was a variant of the standard bomber adapted for torpedo attacks. It could carry a pair of 750-kg LT F5b torpedoes, fitted to racks under each wing root.*



*Below: The seventh Ju 88 prototype was used to test the aircraft in the Zerstörer or heavy fighter role. It proved highly successful, and the RLM ordered it into production as the Ju 88C. Over 3,000 were built as night fighters and long-range day fighters. The original prototype is seen here after being converted into a high-speed communications aircraft.*





# Mistel: Flying bombs

The Mistel S3 was a training version of the combination, which mated a Ju 88A-6 with a Fw 190A-6. The two aircraft used fuels of different octane rating, so it would not have been a practical proposition as an operational machine. Combat versions mated the FW 190 with the airframe of the Ju 88G night fighter, with a modified nose carrying a 3800-kg shaped-charge high explosive warhead. This is a captured example being evaluated by the RAF after the end of the war.



ONE IMAGINATIVE use for ageing airframes was as guided bombs. Codenamed *Mistel* (Mistletoe), this involved piggy-backing a fighter on to a pilotless Ju 88 packed with explosives. On later versions the cockpit of the bomber was removed and an extended nose fitted with a long stand-off fuse was installed in its place. Once within sight of the target, the pilot in the fighter aimed the whole combination then released the Ju 88. Initial attacks in May 1944 were conducted against Allied shipping, by night. Plans were laid for a mass raid on the Royal Navy fleet base of Scapa

Flow in December 1944: 60 Mistel combinations were to fly from Denmark to make a night attack. The mission was loaded with risk – the lumbering *Mistel* combinations would have been slaughtered had British night-fighters intercepted them. It was never put to the test: the mission was cancelled “due to bad weather.” An even larger raid early in 1945 was also cancelled as the Red Army overran many of the *Mistel* combinations on their airfields. The target had been the major Soviet tank factories – an important target, but one which the Luftwaffe was attacking four years too late!



Above: The prototype Mistel linked a Messerschmitt Bf 109F-4 to a Ju 88A-4. Flying early in 1943, the concept seemed to have promise. In July 1943 Junkers were instructed to prepare 15 old A-series bombers for Mistel use. The first operational unit was a staffel of KG 101, which mounted its first attack on Allied invasion shipping in June 1944.

German bombers launched across the Channel that summer, but its defensive armament had to be increased during the Battle of Britain because even the *Schnellbomber* proved vulnerable to attacking Hurricanes and Spitfires.

## SELF-DEFENCE

Improvised arrangements of up to four machine guns were common, but since they had to be aimed and fired individually, feeding from 75-round drums that gave just 3 seconds of fire, their effect was more psychological than practical.

A revised cockpit layout inside a bulbous, all-glazed nose had been on the drawing board since 1936. The Ju 88B was finally flown in 1940, its rearward

armament including a 13-mm machine gun with limited traverse and a 7.92-mm machine gun in a turret. Longer wings and a number of other improvements gave it a very different look: sufficiently so for Goering to redesignate it as the Ju 188 in May 1942. “Now,” he quipped, “We can demonstrate to England that we also have something new.”

The Ju 88 was the most versatile German aircraft of the war, rivalling the Mosquito in the range of missions it could fly. Over 40 variants were completed, and reconnaissance aircraft, bombers and fighters underwent constant improvements. From 1942 the Ju 88 was the most numerous type of bomber in the Luftwaffe, supplanting the He 111 which was increasingly used

as a transport.

The British were well informed about the capabilities of the Ju 88. A bomber which crash-landed in the summer of 1940 was restored to airworthy condition by the RAF and flown early in 1941. In July 1941 a Ju 88A-6 landed by mistake at an airfield near Bristol and the crew were overpowered before they realised they not flown home but had been flying on a reciprocal bearing. The crew of a Ju 88A-5 made the same error four months later, putting down at the RAF airfield at Chivenor in North Devonshire.

## DEFECTORS

Two Ju 88 crews defected. In July 1943 a Rumanian pilot flew to Limassol, Cyprus with a

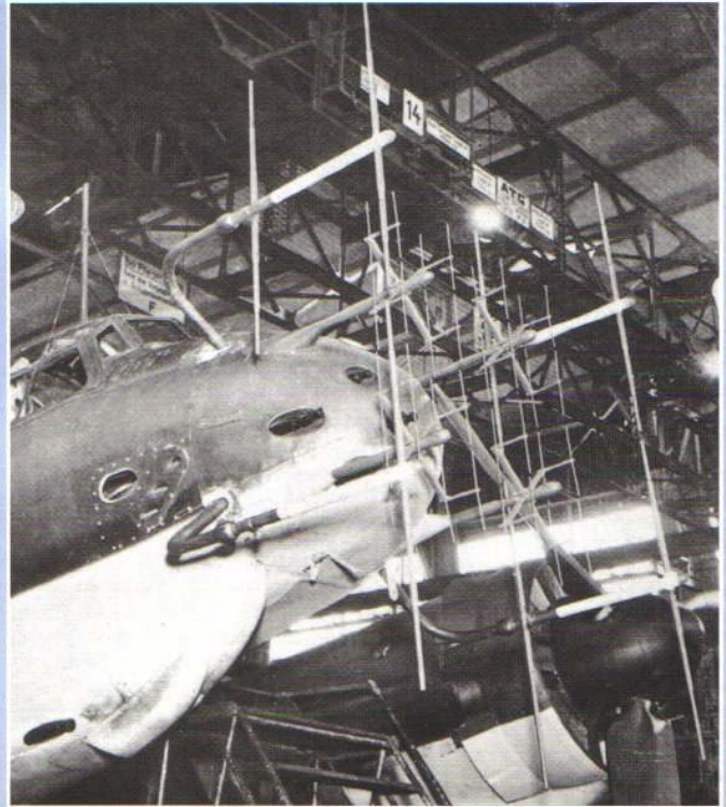
brand-new Ju 88D-1. And in an incident still subject to much speculation, a crew from an elite Luftwaffe night-fighter squadron flew their Ju 88R-1 to Dyce, near Aberdeen, apparently by prior arrangement. Met by an escort of RAF Spitfires over the Scottish coast, *Oberleutnant* Heinrich Schmitt, *Oberfeldwebel* Paul Rosenberger and *Oberfeldwebel* Erich Kantwill signalled their colleagues in 10/NJG 3 they were ditching in the North Sea after an engine fire. Their advanced night-fighter, complete with FuG Lichtenstein radar, was minutely examined and Schmitt and Rosenberger later broadcast on British radio. Preserved at RAF St Athan, their aircraft is one of only 3 Ju 88s to survive to the present day.





# NIGHT FIGHTER

**J**UNKERS DEVELOPED a *Zerstörer* (destroyer) version of the Ju 88 in 1940, just as the limitations of the Bf Messerschmitt 110 were becoming obvious over Britain. The new fighter proved timely – although showing its mettle by day in long-range operations over the Bay of Biscay, it was as a nocturnal predator that the Ju-88C really made its mark. Ultimately, over 3,000 C-series night fighters were delivered, later versions being equipped with radar and upward-firing cannon. Gun armament increased from 13-mm machine guns to up to six 20-mm cannon. One short burst at close range was enough to bring down a heavy bomber. Some of these valuable aircraft were hazarded in daylight when incessant American raids stung Goering into ordering a maximum effort in the summer of 1944. Their appearance in American gun cameras was in some cases the first time the Allies had seen these nocturnal hunters, but in spite of their heavy armament they were not a major threat. The combined weight of their radar and cannon had a performance penalty which meant that the Ju 88 stood little chance in a fight with the P-51 Mustangs and P-47 Thunderbolts now escorting the American heavies.



*Above: This Ju 88C-6 is equipped with Lichtenstein FuG 202 BC and FuG 220 SN-2 radar. Pilots accepted the performance penalty from the forest of airds because the powerful SN-2 had a minimum range of 400m while the older BC's minimum was 200m.*

*Left: Non-radar-equipped versions of the Ju 88C were used as 'train busters' on the Eastern Front. This Ju 88C-6 has had its gun-equipped nose painted to resemble a relatively harmless bomber, presumably to deceive Soviet fighter pilots.*

*Below: The ultimate development of the Ju 88 was the Ju 388, built in reconnaissance, bomber and night fighter versions. Supremely capable, they came too late to make any difference to the air war, and none were to see operational squadron service.*

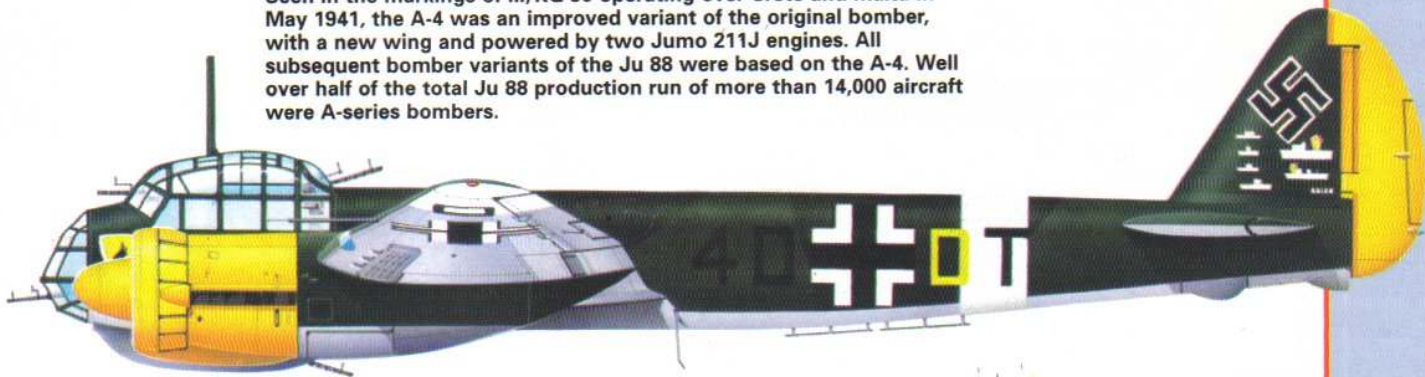






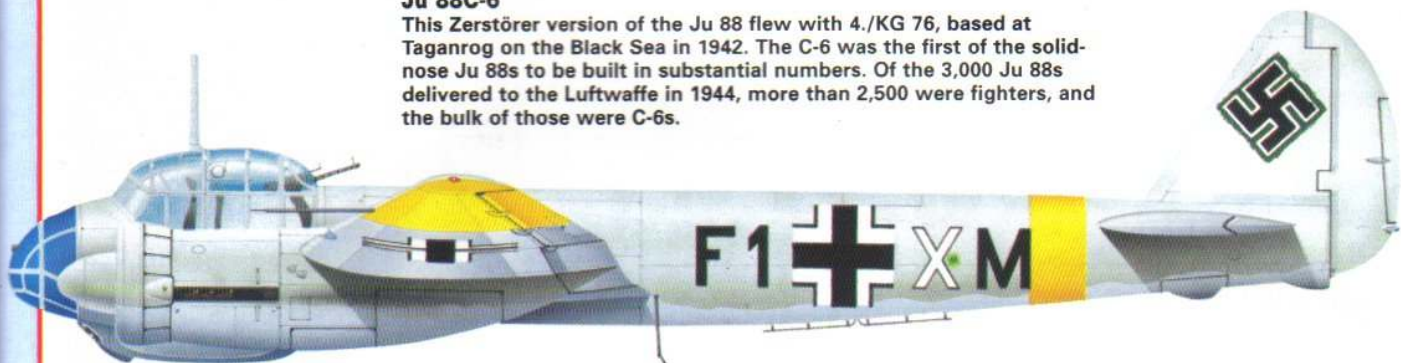
## Ju 88A-4

Seen in the markings of III/KG 30 operating over Crete and Malta in May 1941, the A-4 was an improved variant of the original bomber, with a new wing and powered by two Jumo 211J engines. All subsequent bomber variants of the Ju 88 were based on the A-4. Well over half of the total Ju 88 production run of more than 14,000 aircraft were A-series bombers.



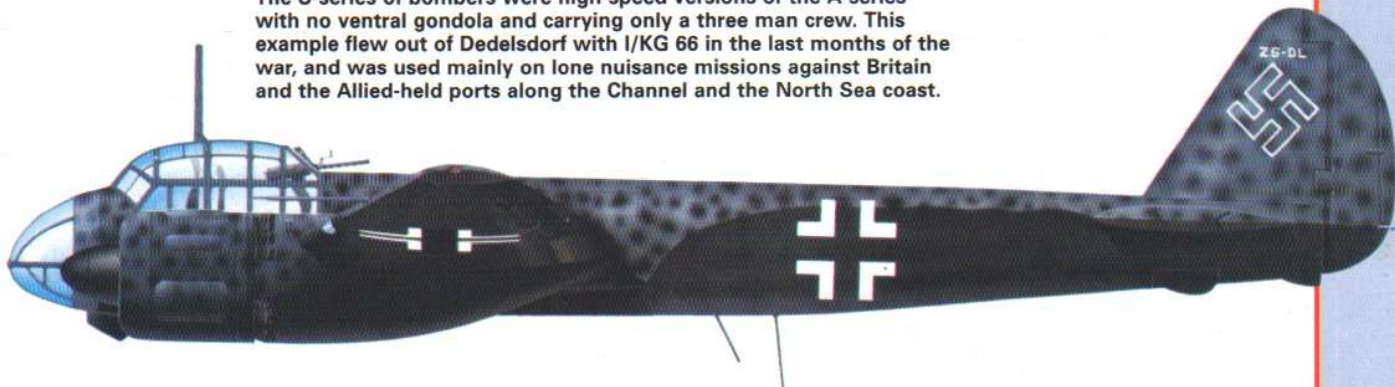
## Ju 88C-6

This Zerstörer version of the Ju 88 flew with 4./KG 76, based at Taganrog on the Black Sea in 1942. The C-6 was the first of the solid-nose Ju 88s to be built in substantial numbers. Of the 3,000 Ju 88s delivered to the Luftwaffe in 1944, more than 2,500 were fighters, and the bulk of those were C-6s.



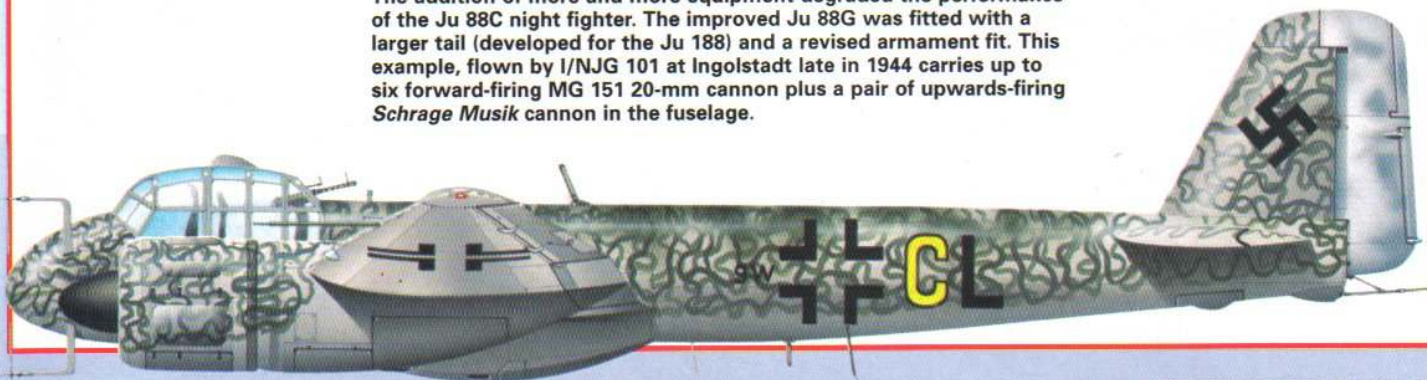
## Ju 88S-1

The S-series of bombers were high-speed versions of the A-series with no ventral gondola and carrying only a three man crew. This example flew out of Dedelsdorf with I/KG 66 in the last months of the war, and was used mainly on lone nuisance missions against Britain and the Allied-held ports along the Channel and the North Sea coast.



## Ju 88G-6b

The addition of more and more equipment degraded the performance of the Ju 88C night fighter. The improved Ju 88G was fitted with a larger tail (developed for the Ju 188) and a revised armament fit. This example, flown by I/NJG 101 at Ingolstadt late in 1944 carries up to six forward-firing MG 151 20-mm cannon plus a pair of upwards-firing *Schrage Musik* cannon in the fuselage.







# PARTY ART



The 'Germanic Soldier' bust was created in the 1930s in the classical head and shoulders style. The helmet depicted is the M1916 pattern introduced by the Imperial German Army halfway through the Great War, which was used by the Reichswehr and the Wehrmacht into the late 1930s. Casts of such busts came in a variety of sizes, and were often given as presentation pieces with suitable dedication plaques fitted to marble bases.



# NAZI SYMBOLS



The Eagle and Swastika were amongst the most common of all Nazi symbols. The eagle with 'drop' wings was used massively at the Nuremberg rally ground, and the design was replicated for use as desk or mantelpiece ornaments to commemorate the various Parteitage. The example below, measuring 22 cm in height, was finished in silver plate. The presentation plaque shows that it was given as a trophy by SA-Gruppe Franken, which included Nuremberg in its territory. The smaller than usual eagle to the left is 15-cm high. It had a bronze patina applied during manufacture, and is typical of the kind of ornament which could be bought from NSDAP-controlled shops in Nuremberg.

**A**RT IN THE Nazi state was strictly controlled. Hitler was the ultimate arbiter of what was acceptable, and his tastes ran strongly in the direction of the realistic and the heroic. While other senior Nazis such as Goering and Goebbels might have had more eclectic tastes, in public at least they followed the party line.

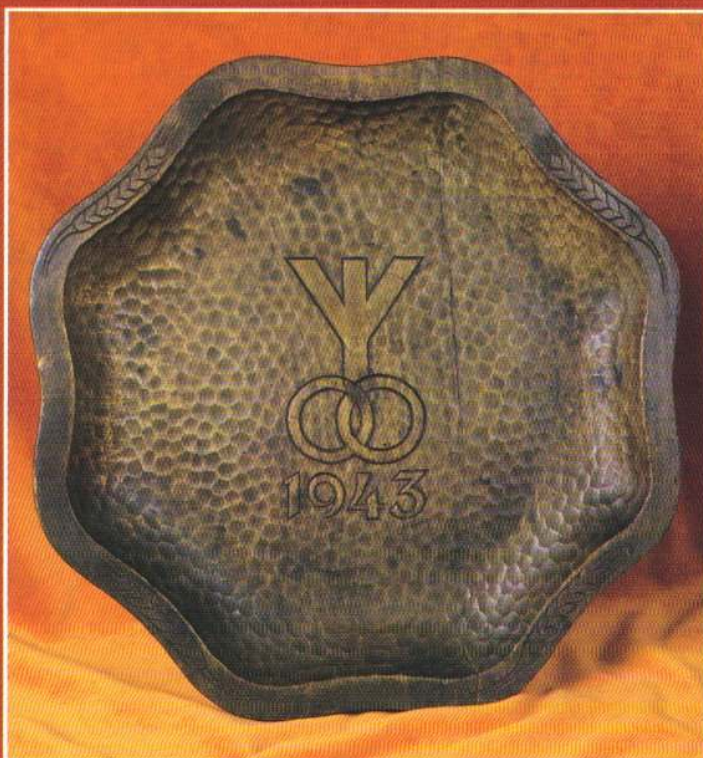
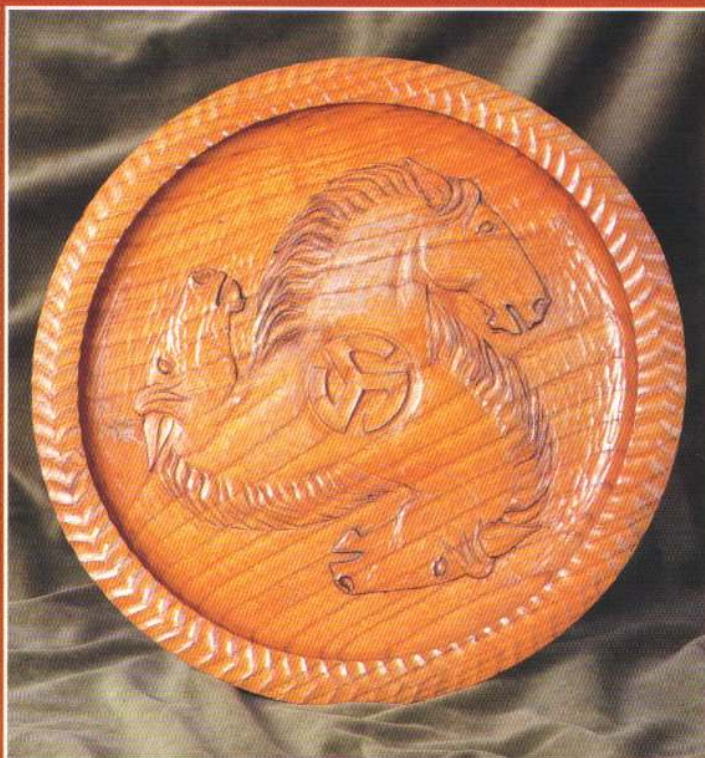
## SCULPTURE

Sculpture was perhaps the most characteristic of all the Nazi arts, favouring realistic portraiture and works on a monumental scale. Well-off Germans could acquire reproductions of the massive works made by Arno Breker or Josef Thorak, as well as scaled down copies of notable Nazi monuments and symbols.

One exception to the 'realistic' rule was the kind of folk-art inspired by Himmler and the SS. Pieces, often carved from wood, were acceptable if they harked back to an earlier time or could be demonstrated to be *Volkisch* or made in a traditional German style.







Above: A carved 'wedding' plate was a treasured memento of German marriage ceremonies. Traditionally bread would be eaten from such plates at anniversaries and other festive occasions through the year. This example has ears of wheat, a traditional fertility symbol, carved into the rim, together with interlocking wedding rings and a 'life' rune above the year of marriage – 1943 in this case.

Above left: Carved wooden ornaments have always been popular in rural areas of Germany. The Nazis, with their 'back to the land' philosophy, saw them as ideal gifts. This plate was presented to the commander of the 27th SS Freiwillige Grenadier Division Langemarck for the winter solstice or Yulfest in 1944 – just days before the understrength unit was thrown into the fighting in East Prussia. The division's symbol was a Trifos or three-legged sunwheel swastika, and the example at the centre of this plate was mirrored by three carved horse heads.

Left: A replica of the massive bronze plaque erected by the Nazis beside Munich's Feldherrenhalle. Located where Residenzstrasse entered the Odeonsplatz, the monument commemorated the 16 Nazis who were killed during the abortive Putsch on 9 November 1923. The monument played a major part in the Nazi celebration of the Putsch, and desk replicas like this were sold in a number of Munich art shops.



Adolf Hitler's image was omnipresent in Germany during the Third Reich. Busts were a popular if expensive way of honouring the Nazi Führer, and many different examples were executed by sculptors all over the Reich. They varied from small to very large. Some were one-off works of art produced to special commission. Others were expensive limited edition bronzes. This example, by Otto Schmidt-Hofer, has a dark green patina applied to spelter (zinc alloy). Lower quality copies were mass-produced and sold through commercial outlets.





# A Z

## OF THE THIRD REICH

### Speer, Albert (1905 - 1981)

Albert Speer was one of the very few middle class Germans to gain senior status in the Third Reich hierarchy. Born on 10 March 1905 at Mannheim he joined the NSDAP in 1931 after hearing Hitler speak. He received architectural commissions from party officers and undertook the technical arrangements for the 1933 Nuremberg Rally. This drew him to Hitler's attention and the young architect received major commissions as well as undertaking plans for the complete redesign of Berlin. In 1938 he was awarded the *Goldenes Parteiabzeichen* – the Gold Party badge. In 1942

following the mysterious death of Fritz Todt in an air crash he took over the post of Minister of Armaments as well as General Inspector of Water and Energy, Chief of Organisation Todt and the NSKK and membership of the Central Planning Bureau.

He was able to achieve high production even while Germany was being subjected to heavy air attacks by the USAAF and RAF. Speer proved to be an exceptional administrator, but his position ensured that at the close of the war he would be classed as a major war criminal. At Nuremberg, in company with von Schirach, he expressed

shame and remorse for the activities of the Third Reich. On 1 October 1946 he was sentenced to twenty years in prison. He was released in 1966 and died on 1 September 1981 in London during a visit to participate in a television programme.

*Right: Albert Speer's early career as an architect gave no hint of the astonishing feats of organisation he would achieve in charge of Germany's munitions industry.*

**See also Hitler's Henchmen**

**Issue 6: Albert Speer**

**See also Inside the Third Reich**

**Issue 11: Rearmament**



### Speidl, Hans (1897 - 1984)

Born in Metzingen, Württemberg, Speidl entered the Army in 1914. After World War I he remained in the *Reichswehr* and joined the staff of OKW, the Wehrmacht High Command, in 1936. During World War II he held posts in France and Russia. On 5 April 1944 he joined Rommel in France as chief of staff of Army Group B. Speidl worked hard to draw Rommel into the conspiracy against Hitler. By May 1944 they had almost finalised the projected

armistice agreement with the Allies. Following the failure of the July Plot, Speidl was removed from his post. Arrested by the Gestapo he admitted nothing and betrayed nobody. He was acquitted by a court of honour, even though Keitel informed the court that Hitler believed him guilty. Imprisoned until the end of the war, he became an advisor to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer regarding the establishment of the *Bundeswehr*, becoming chief

of the Armed Forces Department of the Defence Ministry of the Federal Republic in 1955. He was the first German supreme commander of NATO land forces in Central Europe, retiring in 1973. He died in Bad Honnel on 28 November 1984.

*Right: Hans Speidl was an unusual soldier. He escaped execution after the July Plot, and masterminded a mass escape from Gestapo custody. He was hidden by a priest until the Allies arrived.*



### Sperrle, Hugo (1885 - 1953)

A World War I fighter pilot, Sperrle was born in Ludwigsburg and entered the army in 1903. After the war he held various command posts in the *Reichswehr* where he helped draw up plans for the future Luftwaffe. In 1936 - 37 he led the *Legion Kondor* in the Spanish Civil War, and from July 1938 commanded *Luftflotte III* which

he led through the campaign in France in 1940. Following this triumph he was promoted to *Generalfeldmarschal*. During the Battle of Britain he urged that the RAF should be destroyed before bombers were switched to other targets. Sperrle was in Paris tasked with defeating the Allied invasion in 1944. When D-Day succeeded he was relieved of his

post. In the OKW war crimes trial of October 1948, Sperrle was acquitted of all charges. He died near Landsberg am Lech on 2 April 1953.

*Right: An ox-like man of brutal appearance, Sperrle rivalled Goering in his sybaritic lifestyle. Hitler became so tired of reports of Sperrle's excesses that he was axed in August 1944.*



### SS (*Schutzstaffel*)

The *Schutzstaffel* or SS was formed in 1925. Originally intended as a protection squad within the SA, it grew slowly and by November 1930 it numbered only 400 men. Heinrich Himmler, the leader of the SS since 1929,

was ambitious however. After 1933 the SS was sub-divided; the *Allgemeine* or 'General' SS was supplemented by the armed *Verfügungstruppe* (SS VT or 'Special Duty Units'). These would form the nucleus of both

the Waffen-SS and the *Totenkopfverbände* or SS-TV – the concentration camp guards.

Still nominally part of the SA, the SS asserted its independence by being the Party's main weapon in the Night of the Long Knives,

effectively destroying the leadership of the SA.

Himmler's dream was to make the SS a new order of Teutonic Knights, a 'state within a state'. This aim had been achieved by the close of 1944. By now the SS



was a huge apparatus which ran the concentration and extermination camps, oversaw race and ethnicity and handled Reich and overseas intelligence and security. At its peak, the Waffen-SS had nearly a million men under arms. At Nuremberg the SS was declared an illegal organisation, and all members were declared war criminals.

*Right: SS members stand guard in front of Julius Streicher at a Party meeting in the early 1930s. From small beginnings as a protection squad the SS was to grow into a powerful 'State within a state'*

**See also Inside the Third Reich**

**Issue 7: The SS State**

**See also Hitler's Henchmen**

**Issue 4: Heinrich Himmler**



## SS-Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt (SS-WVHA)

The Economic and Administrative Central Office of the SS was its business arm, controlling all concentration camps and labour camps together with the administration and supply of the Waffen-SS.

Established to provide the SS with funding independent of the army or the government, the

original SS businesses controlled an excavation and quarrying company; a company marketing products from the workshops in the concentration camps; a foodstuffs, estates, forestry and fishery company; and a textile and leather company based on Ravensbrueck that produced SS uniforms. As the SS economics

empire expanded it grew to control most of the Reich's soft-drink and mineral water factories, a huge furniture-making complex seized from former Jewish and Czech companies; and cement, brick, lime and ceramic companies, mostly from Poland and often using Jewish slave labour. From 1942 to 1945 the

Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt was headed by SS-Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl, a man who favoured humane treatment of the slave labourers simply because they were then more productive.

**See also Inside the Third Reich**

**Issue 7: The SS State**

## Stauffenberg, Graf Claus Schenk von (1907 - 1944)

Born at Jettingen bei Günzburg von Stauffenberg came from a conservative royalist background. In 1926 he joined the Bamberg 17th Cavalry Regiment. He initially welcomed the Nazis and before the war was on the staff of the War Academy in Berlin. In World War II he served with distinction in Poland, France and North Africa. In Tunisia in April 1943 he was wounded in the face, both hands and the knee by Allied fighters. He lost an eye, his right hand, part of the left hand and part of his leg. During recovery von Stauffenberg revised his views on Hitler, whom

he named the 'Master of Vermin'.

Stauffenberg was a member of the Kreisau Circle, and following the arrest of Helmuth James Graf von Moltke in January 1944 joined the conspiracy in which he became a driving force. On 20 July 1944 von Stauffenberg carried the brief case containing a time bomb into the headquarters in Rastenburg, East Prussia. Following the explosion he was convinced Hitler was dead and bluffed his way onto a flight to Berlin. The code word 'Valkyrie' – for the arrest of SS and government officials in Berlin –

was issued too late, and von Stauffenberg was arrested. He was summarily executed the same day in the Army HQ in Bendlerstrasse in Berlin.

*Right: An aristocratic career soldier, Claus von Stauffenberg was one of the driving forces behind the younger generation of army officers who were the core of the plot against Adolf Hitler.*



**See also Inside the Third Reich**

**Issue 20: Opposition to Hitler**

**See also Secret files**

**Issue 9: Hitler's Vengeance**

## Strasser, Gregor and Otto (1892 - 1934, 1897 - 1974)

Gregor Strasser, born in Geisenfeld, Lower Bavaria, served with distinction in World War I being commissioned and awarded the Iron Cross First and Second Class. Both he and his younger brother Otto were early members of the Nazi Party. The Strassers represented the Socialist wing of the Party and as such became increasingly estranged from the mainstream organisation.

The Strassers saw Hitler's circle of friends from Munich as corrupt: they were especially concerned that Hitler had sided with big business and the remnants of the Hohenzollern aristocracy. Otto was thrown out of the Party and went into exile. Gregor, one of Hitler's few rivals for the leadership of the Nazis, argued with the Führer. He resigned and when he returned from a holiday in 1933 found that Hitler had taken power and was

shaping Germany into a dictatorship.

In Hitler's eyes Gregor remained a threat, especially when his name was linked with SA leader Ernst Röhm. He was one of the victims of the Night of the Long Knives, being murdered in June 1934. Otto escaped from Germany to Switzerland and then on to Canada. He returned to Germany after the war and attempted to re-enter politics. He died in Munich in 1974.

*Right: Gregor Strasser with one of his protégés, Joseph Goebbels, who would later defect to Hitler's wing of the Nazi Party. Strasser's popularity as one of the few Nazi leaders who could genuinely challenge the Führer would be his death warrant during the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934. His even more radical brother Otto managed to avoid the SS killers.*





## Streicher, Julius (1885 - 1946)

Editor of the crude anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stürmer*, Streicher was born in the village of Fleinhausen, Upper Bavaria on 12 February 1885. He qualified as a teacher before becoming a lieutenant in the Bavarian army. During World War I he won the Iron Cross First and Second Class. He returned to teaching after the war. In 1919 he set up a political party based on anti-Semitism. Sacked from his teaching post in 1928 he became a master rabble-rouser for the

NSDAP. He had established *Der Stürmer* in 1923 and the paper was filled with cartoons, stories of ritual murder, pornography and letters denouncing Jews. An editorial even announced the discovery that Christ was not a Jew. Streicher's followers were fanatical in their devotion, though in many people he aroused feelings of loathing. He was a brutal and unpredictable man and by 1939 his behaviour had become so extreme that Hitler imposed a *Redeverbot* –

Speaking Ban – on him. Although by the outbreak of war he was largely without influence in the Nazi Party, he was nevertheless found guilty of crimes against humanity at Nuremberg. He was hanged on 16 October 1946. His last words were "Heil Hitler!"

*Right: A one-time teacher with a gift for turning out a pithy phrase, the notoriously anti-Semitic Julius Streicher was immensely important in creating the early character of National Socialism, though his influence did not last.*



## Tannenberg Bund

The *Tannenberg Bund* was an ultra-right wing organisation of ex-soldiers set up by General Erich Ludendorff in 1926. It was named after Field Marshal von Hindenburg's victory over the Russians in August 1914 – Ludendorff had been Hindenburg's Chief-of-Staff.

The *Bund* was anti-Communist, anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic, groups that Ludendorff believed were "die überstaatlichen Mächte" – the Powers above the State. Despite its illustrious name and leadership it never achieved the status of a political party and most of its members drifted into

the NSDAP. Tannenberg was also the code name for the deployment of the first *Einsatzkommandos* in 1939. Five squads with a total strength of 2,700 were sent into Poland and operated from September to 20 November. Hitler chose the name for his HQ from 28 June to 6 July 1940 located west of Freudenstadt in the Black Forest and used during the invasion of France.

*Right: Ludendorff and Hindenburg confer during World War I. It was their triumph at Tannenberg which provided the inspiration for Ludendorff's extreme right wing organisation of the late 1920s.*



## Tatkreis – Action Circle

The Action Circle was one of the many *völkisch* movements that flourished during the Weimar Republic. Set up in 1909, its members considered themselves conservative revolutionaries. They combined nationalism and racialism and attacked modern democracy as outmoded.

The group's publication *Die Tat* – The Deed/Action – was edited

by Hans Zehrer between 1929 and 1933. It called for an anti-democratic elitism, for economic *autarky* and for the establishment of a permanent nation-state with anti-capitalist features. *Die Tat* saw itself as the "centre of conservative revolution" and so distanced itself from the South German vulgarity of the Nazi Party. Even so, its views had

considerable influence on the early development of the NSDAP.

Following the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, members of the *Tatkreis* were split. A number felt that while Hitler and the Nazis were far from ideal, they were acceptable since they had adopted some of the ideas of the circle. Most with such views joined the NSDAP. However other

members were totally opposed to the Nazis, an opposition for which many paid with their lives. Zehrer resigned from the editorship of *Die Tat*. He refused to join the SS and found himself classified as an 'insubordinate conservative'. He survived the war and went on to be the editor of Axel Springer's *Die Welt* from 1953 to his death in 1966.

## Tausendjähriges Reich – thousand-year Reich

In the philosophy of the Christian Middle Ages the reign of Christ which would follow the 'resurrection of the righteous' was called the Third Reich or Third Realm of the Holy Spirit. In the 20th Century many Nazis saw the Third Reich as the logical progression of the First Reich of The Holy Roman Empire and the Second Reich – the empire founded by Otto von Bismarck in 1871 which had lasted until 1918.

Hitler rejected such notions, but at the 1934 Reich Party Congress he said that "there will be no more revolutions in Germany for the next thousand

years". He was to repeat the claim in 1940, when he announced that the battle of France would decide the fate of Europe for the next thousand years.

The 'Thousand Year Reich' was too much for all but the most ardent Nazis to accept, and the concept was ridiculed inside and outside Germany.

*Right: As the war swung against the Third Reich, the ludicrous boast that the Nazi empire would last for a thousand years became even more ridiculous – though it was a potent propaganda tool for the Allies.*





## Terboven, Josef (1898 - 1945)

Born in Essen on 23 May 1898 Josef Terboven was an early member of the NSDAP, taking part in the Beer Hall Putsch. On 28 June 1934 as a cover for the final moves of the Röhm Purge, Hitler attended Terboven's wedding. On 24 April 1940 he was appointed the *Reichskommissar für Norwegen* - Reich Commissioner for Norway.

In this post Terboven conducted himself much as Reinhard

Heydrich would as Reich Commissioner in Czechoslovakia. His implementation of the Final Solution began on June 1941 when following the invasion of the USSR he had all the Jews in Tromsø and other northern towns deported to Germany. The Jews of Oslo remained unharmed but from 2 February 1942 were forced to wear the Jewish star and have their documents stamped with a J. Terboven worked hard to ensure

that Norway provided labour and raw materials for the German Four Year Plan. This even included export of granite for planned heroic sculptures of Hitler. To avoid arrest at the end of the war he committed suicide.

*Right: Josef Terboven held a number of high Party positions before becoming the brutal ruler in Norway. He rode roughshod over the collaborative regime of Vidkun Quisling.*



## Theresienstadt (Terezin)

The former barracks and fortress of Theresienstadt or Terezin in Bohemia were used as the basis for this 'model' concentration camp set up in November 1941 by Reinhard Heydrich. The camp was designed to house the elderly, war veterans, retired government officials and Jews married to Aryans and enjoyed a benign reputation. In reality it was a transit camp for the extermination centres in Poland.

The Nazis made a propaganda film about Terezin, entitled *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* - The Führer Makes a Gift of a City to the Jews. This film helped to convince the Danish Red Cross that Jews who had been sent from Denmark were

being resettled in humane conditions.

At its peak in September 1942 the camp held 58,000 people, even though it had been designed to house only 7,000. In all, 85,934 people were deported from Theresienstadt to extermination camps, of whom 84,000 were killed.

*Right: A still from the Nazi film about Terezin, showing Jews relaxing in an outdoor cafe. This propaganda convinced many neutral observers that life in the ghetto was not too bad. In reality, Terezin was simply a transit point on the road to Auschwitz.*

**See also The Holocaust**  
**Issue 10: Terezin**



## Thingspiel

This revival of a Teutonic tribal assembly, the Thingspiel was part of the bogus Nazi obsession with Aryan mysticism. *Thingspiel* were held in specially constructed classical-style amphitheatres known as *Thingspielplätzen*. Performances often involved the *Hitlerjugend* who were co-opted in to fight

mock battles. Special attention was given to the pagan belief in earth, air, fire and water. In addition, Nazi martyrs were honoured at the *Thingspielplätzen*. This sort of presentation was the only theatrical art form that the Nazis contributed to German culture. The first *Thingspielplatte* was

opened on 5 June 1934 in Brandenbergen bei Halle, by the end of the following year ten had been opened. The quality of the plays and the use of Choral Poetry did not appeal to the German population which became disenchanted with Teutonic drama and Nazi propaganda. Most favoured

comedy films and light opera. Goebbels, who had been an advocate of the *Thingspiel*, realised that they were not a success and from 1935 distanced himself from the concept. The *Thingspielplätzen* were renamed *Freilichtbühnen* - "Open-air Stages." By 1937 the *Thingspiel* movement had been abandoned.

## Thorak, Josef (1889 - 1952)

Born in Salzburg Thorak drew his initial inspiration from Auguste Rodin. In the 1920s he produced neo-classical busts and sculptures and in 1928 won the State Prize of the Prussian Academy of Arts.

With his massive bronze and marble nudes of powerfully built men and Junoesque women, he was second only to Arno Breker in popularity with the Nazis. Hitler selected statues by Thorak for an award for exemplifying 'healthy Nordic eroticism' and had a huge studio set up for him. It was here that Thorak created the 16 metre high heroic figures that were part of the Autobahn and the Reich

Sports Field. After the war Thorak was exonerated by a Munich court and returned to work. He died in Hartmannsberg, Upper Bavaria on 26 February 1952.

*Right: Thorak liked big sculptures. The main spirit behind his work conformed to National Socialist ideas about what made 'good' art. It was heroic and single-minded. His subjects were usually of the 'Aryan' type, firmly cast in the super-man mould. Impressed by this Nazi artist, Hitler presented Thorak with a studio in Munich.*

**See also Inside the Reich**  
**Issue 6: Nazi Art**





## Thule Gesellschaft – Thule Society

Founded in Munich in 1918 by Rudolf von Sebottendorf, the *Thule Gesellschaft* was a *völkisch* club masquerading as a discussion circle for the study of old Germanic literature. Its members were devoted to extreme nationalism, race mysticism, occultism and anti-Semitism, and aimed to penetrate the Bavarian government and society. The *Thule Gesellschaft* was an offshoot of the Berlin based *Germanenorden* or

Teutonic Order that had branches, a little like the Masons, in towns throughout Germany. The Munich branch was named *Thule* after the legendary homeland of the ancient German race. The group had 1,500 members in Bavaria, including Dietrich Eckart, Rudolf Hess and Alfred Rosenberg. The Society used mystical symbols, including the swastika or *Hakenkreuz*. In an attempt to spread its message through the working classes, the society

sponsored railwayman Anton Drexler's *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or German Workers Party – a movement that eventually became the NSDAP. Many members of the *Thule Gesellschaft* joined the NSDAP and put their stamp on its doctrines and philosophies.

**Right: The Thule Society's bookplate, featuring a rounded 'Sunwheel' swastika. The Thule Society provided a great deal of the original impetus to the Nazis.**



## Thyssen, Fritz (1873 - 1951)

Multimillionaire steel industrialist Fritz Thyssen was born in Styrum bei Mülheim an der Ruhr. After the death of his father August he took over the family steel business. He was angered by the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 and supported anti-French patriots like Leo Schlageter. Thyssen was arrested and faced a French court.

He had little use for the Weimar Republic and actively assisted Hitler and the Nazis with money and contacts in industry. In 1928 Thyssen founded the powerful steel cartel *Vereinigte Stahlwerke* – United Steel Works. In 1931 he

joined the Nazi Party. However by 1935 he started to have doubts and in 1938 resigned from the Prussian *Staatsrat* (Council of State) in protest against the treatment of Jews. He denounced Dr Robert Ley, head of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* or German Labour Front, as a "stammering drunkard." In 1939 he protested in a Reichstag speech against the coming war and on 28 December 1939 he left for Switzerland. He sent a full letter to Hitler explaining his disappointment with the Nazi State and his reasons for leaving the country. The Nazis denounced him and

seized his assets. He was later arrested in France and until 1945 was held in concentration camps. After the war he moved to South America and died in Buenos Aires on 8 February 1951.

**Right: Fritz Thyssen was already a backer of right-wing nationalist parties when he began to support the Nazi Party in the 1920s. A devout Catholic, he found much to abhor in the Nazis – but saw Hitler as Germany's only hope to return to greatness. He was instrumental in spreading Hitler's message among the Ruhr's industrial barons – an action he would come to regret in the ensuing years.**



## Todt, Fritz (1891 - 1942)

Born in Pforzheim, Baden on 4 September 1891 Fritz Todt served with distinction on the Western Front in World War. From 1916 to 1918 he was a flying observer and was wounded in air combat. After the war he worked in the construction industry.

Todt joined the NSDAP in 1923. In 1931 he was made an *SS-Standartenführer* on the staff of Heinrich Himmler. In 1933 he was named the leader of *Organisation Todt* tasked with major construction projects like the *Reichsautobahn* and the *Westwall*. He was a leader of the

Reich Four Year Plan.

In 1941 he was made General Inspector of Water and Energy Resources. From 1940 until his death in 1942 he was Reich Minister for Armament and Munitions. Additional tasks included changing Russian broad gauge railway tracks to take European locomotives and construction of the Atlantic Wall.

In these positions Todt was well placed to evaluate the strength and weaknesses of the Third Reich. The attack on Russia and the entry of the USA into the war convinced him that Germany would lose the war. On

8 February 1942 on a return flight from Hitler's HQ his aircraft crashed and he was killed. There are suspicions that the crash was the result of sabotage by the Nazi intelligence organisations.

**Right: Fritz Todt (left) came to prominence in 1930 with the publication of a paper entitled 'Proposals and Financial Plans for the Employment of One Million Men.' Although a party member of long standing, Todt was his own man and was not overawed by Hitler. According to Albert Speer the Führer "gave him and his accomplishments a respect which bordered on reverence."**



## Totaler Krieg – Total War

The term 'Total War' was coined by Erich Ludendorff in a 1935 book entitled *Der Totaler Krieg* – translated as 'The Nation at War'. His thesis was that Total War demanded "the strength of the people." The most powerful evocation of the idea of *Totaler Krieg* was the 18 February 1943 speech by Dr Joseph Goebbels at the *Sportpalastrede* (Sport Palace) in Berlin following the

surrender of the 6th Army at Stalingrad. Under a huge banner that read *Totaler Krieg für Kurzester Krieg* – 'Total war for Shortest War' he carried his picked audience with him as they pledged themselves for combat and sacrifice. Goebbels hurled ten questions at the fanaticised crowd to which they thundered back "Ja!" The last question was "Do you want total war?" When

the the crowd roared "Yes!" Goebbels replied with the words of the great call to war in 1812 – "Let Our War-Cry be: Now the People Rise Up and Storm Break Loose!"

The mobilisation in the name of Total War that followed the defeat at Stalingrad included the drafting of women into industry. Cultural life came to a halt, with the exception of entertainment

that would boost the workers' morale. In 1944 when Goebbels became *Generallbevollmächtigter für den totalen Kriegeinsatz* – General Plenipotentiary for the Total War Effort – he used the brutal 'stick' of imprisonment and execution, even for relatives of defeatists, contrasted with the 'carrot' of the promise of new 'Wonder Weapons' which would keep Germany in the war.



# COMING IN THE NEXT VOLUMES OF **HITLER'S** Third Reich

## SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler's World View  
Hitler and Stalin



## THE HOLOCAUST

Judenrat: Jewish councils  
Jewish resistance

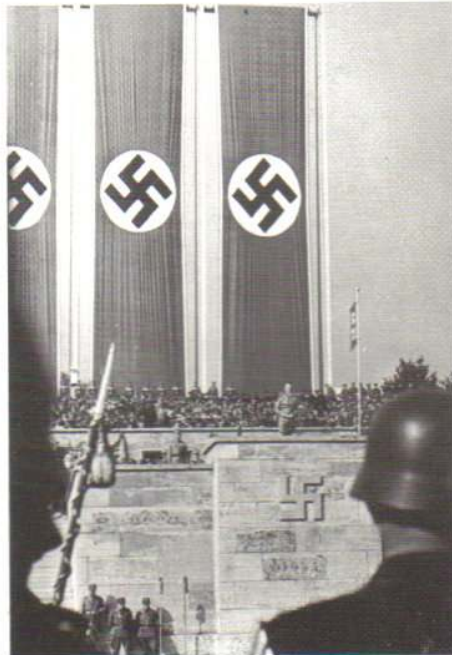


## HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Erhard Milch  
Ernst Kaltenbrunner

## HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Light Flak  
Infantry support  
Panther



## INSIDE THE REICH

Corruption  
Home Front  
Nazis and the Church

## NAZI HORRORS

Malmedy Massacre  
Mauthausen  
Neuengamme



## NAZI SYMBOLS

The Swastika  
Sicherheitsdienst



## A-TO-Z OF THE THIRD REICH



# IN THIS VOLUME OF **HITLER'S** **Third Reich**

## SECRET HITLER FILES

Mussolini is remembered today as a boastful jackal. But in the 1920s he was one of the most powerful men in Europe – and without his example, there might have been no Hitler.

## INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

Berlin 1936 – the Nazis hosted the summer Olympic games to showcase Aryan supremacy.



## HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Arthur Seyss-Inquart, a personable Viennese Lawyer, shot to prominence when he engineered Germany's take-over of Austria in 1938. But it was for his brutal wartime governorship of the Netherlands that he was executed at Nuremberg.



## HITLER'S BATTLES

The Wehrmacht's long-awaited nightmare came on 6 June 1944, when the Western Allies opened a second front with their landing on the beaches of Normandy.

## WAR MACHINE

The Junkers Ju 88 was one of the most versatile aircraft of the war. Mainstay of the Luftwaffe's bomber force, it proved capable of performing almost every other sort of combat mission.



## NAZI SYMBOLS

Sculpture was probably the most characteristic of all Nazi art forms. Wealthy Germans could buy high-quality reproductions of the massive pieces used to adorn Party ceremonies.

